

## COMMITTEE FOR AGRICULTURE, ENVIRONMENT AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

THURSDAY 24 SEPTEMBER 2020  
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present: Mr Declan McAleer MLA (Chairperson)  
Mr Philip McGuigan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mrs Rosemary Barton MLA  
Mr John Blair MLA  
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 Elaine Farrell, Assistant Clerk  
Ms Marion Johnson, Clerical Supervisor  
Ms Kate Duffy, Clerical Officer

*The meeting commenced at 9.05 a.m. in open session*

#### **1. Apologies**

Clare Bailey MLA.

#### **2. Chairperson's Business**

The Chairperson advised the Committee that StarLeaf training and testing has been completed with departmental officials and that the issues from previous weeks should now be resolved.

#### **3. Draft minutes**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 17 September 2020.

#### **4. Matters arising**

Mr McGlone MLA raised the issue of the possibility of requesting advice from Legal Service on the matter of Committee Consideration of SIs and whether Legal Services had been asked to watch the Committee proceedings. It was agreed that Legal Services would be provided with a link to the recording of the relevant Committee meetings.

#### **5. Departmental Oral Briefing: Overall DAERA Transition Programme/Internal Market Bill**

The following departmental officials joined the meeting at 9.09 a.m.

Dr Denis McMahon, Permanent Secretary  
Mr Robert Huey, Chief Veterinary Officer  
Mr Norman Fulton, Head of Food and Farming Group (via StarLeaf)  
Mr Mark Livingstone, Director of Operational Readiness/Food Supply Security (via StarLeaf)

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

The oral briefing was reported by Hansard.

*The Chairperson left the meeting at 9.35 a.m. The Deputy Chairperson assumed the Chair.*

*The Chairperson rejoined the meeting at 9.38 a.m. and resumed the Chair.*

*Mr Irwin left the meeting at 10.35 a.m.*

*Mr Irwin rejoined the meeting at 10.38 a.m.*

*Mr Blair left the meeting at 10.39 a.m.*

*Mr Blair rejoined the meeting at 10.45 a.m.*

*Mr McAleer left the meeting at 10.42 a.m.*

*The Deputy Chairperson assumed the Chair.*

*Mr McAleer rejoined the meeting at 10.44 a.m. and resumed the Chair*

*Mr Irwin left the meeting at 10.45 a.m.*

*Mr Irwin rejoined the meeting at 10.46 a.m.*

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their attendance.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request confirmation that legal advice has been sought on the Internal Market Bill by the Executive.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request a written update on the progress of the contingency plans for infrastructure based on a negotiated minimisation and a no deal scenario.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request a written update on veterinary issues and SPS in relation to the Internal Market Bill.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to a request for an informal meeting by the House of Lords EU Environment Sub Committee.

*The meeting suspended at 11.01 a.m.*

*The Chairperson left the meeting at 11.02 a.m.*

*The meeting resumed at 11.13 a.m. with Deputy Chairperson in the Chair*

## **6. Departmental Oral Briefing: Update on the UK Government Fisheries Bill**

The following departmental officials joined the meeting via StarLeaf at 11.14 a.m:

Ms Claire Vincent, Acting Director of Marine and Fisheries  
Mr Paddy Campbell, Acting Head of Sea Fisheries Policy & Grants  
Mr David Steele, Grade 7, Marine and Fisheries Division Policy

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

The oral briefing was reported by Hansard.

*The Chairperson rejoined the meeting at 11.17 a.m. and resumed the Chair.*

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their attendance.

*Agreed:* *The Committee agreed to move into Closed Session at 12.07 p.m.*

*Mr Blair left the meeting at 12.14 p.m.*

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Committee to seek an update on the ongoing issue of ownership of Lough Foyle.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to seek legal advice on a form of words that the Chair may use on the UKG Fisheries Bill LCM debate in the Assembly on 29 September 2020.

## **7. Departmental Oral Briefing: Approach to EU Exit Updates and Secondary Legislation**

The following departmental officials joined the meeting via StarLeaf at 12.23 p.m:

Dr Rosemary Agnew, Director of Brexit, Food and Farming Group  
Mr Kevin Murphy, Head of Brexit Secondary Legislation Team

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

The oral briefing was reported by Hansard.

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their attendance.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to move into Closed Session.

*The meeting moved into Closed Session at 12.40 p.m.*

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to request legal advice on the process and approach that it is being asked to follow in relation to Statutory Instruments.

*The meeting moved into Open Session at 12.46 p.m.*

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to move to agenda items 9 and 10 next.

## **8. Correspondence**

The Committee noted the following items of correspondence:

- i. Correspondence from the Department on The Single Use Carrier Bags Charge (Coronavirus Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2020.

The Committee considered the copied correspondence to the UFU on concerns it had raised about the impact of Covid-19 on the wool market.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request it provides a written update on progress made in relation to enhancing demand and the market for wool.

The Committee considered correspondence from the Department in response to issues raised at the meeting on 3 September 2020.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request that it updates the Committee on work with the AHWNI Phase 2 measures.

The Committee considered the correspondence from the Committee on Procedures in relation to a review of Standing Orders 110-116.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Committee on Procedures to advise that it was content with the proposal to extend the temporary provisions in Standing Orders 110-116 until 31 January 2021.

## **9. Forward Work Programme**

The Committee discussed the Forward Work Programme.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to take a thematic approach to the consideration of SIs.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the suggested questions for the oral evidence session with the ports on 8 October 2020.

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

## **10. Departmental Oral Briefing: The Common Organisation of the Markets in Agricultural Products (Producer Organisations and Wine) (Amendment etc.) (EU Exit) Regulations 2020 [AGS/04-Reserved] and the Agriculture (Payments) (Amendment etc) (EU Exit)**

The following departmental officials joined the meeting via StarLeaf at 12.53 p.m.

Colette McMaster, Director of Sustainable Agri-Food Development  
Elaine McCrory, Head of Agri-Food Brexit 1

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

The oral briefing was reported by Hansard.

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their attendance.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to move into Closed Session.

*The meeting moved into Closed Session at 1.20 p.m.*

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to further consider the AGS/04 and AGS/05 at the meeting on 1 October 2020 and would request that officials make themselves available to attend the meeting on that date in order to provide further clarification.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request that written briefings should be more detailed with less focus on providing detailed information in oral briefings.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to defer the agenda item on AOB until the next meeting.

## **11. 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 1 October 2020 at 9.00 a.m. in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

*The meeting adjourned at 1.22 p.m.*

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Declan McAleer, Chairperson, Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development

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Date

