



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

Minutes of Proceedings

Thursday 3 June 2021

Meeting Location: Room 30, Parliament Buildings

Present: Declan McAleer MLA (Chairperson)
Philip McGuigan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Clare Bailey MLA
Rosemary Barton MLA
John Blair MLA
Maurice Bradley MLA
Harry Harvey MLA
William Irwin MLA
Patsy McGlone MLA

Apologies: None

In Attendance: Nick Henry, Clerk



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Kate Duffy, Clerical Officer

In Attendance by Video or Teleconference:

Elaine Farrell, Assistant Clerk

Neal Flanagan, Assistant Clerk

Marion Johnson, Clerical Supervisor

The meeting commenced at 9.31 a.m. in Open Session

1. Apologies

None.

2. Chairpersons Business

None.

3. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The minutes of the meeting held on 27 May 2021 will be added to the agenda for the meeting on 10 June 2021 for agreement.

4. Matters arising

None.



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The meeting suspended at 9.36 a.m.

The meeting resumed at 9.40 a.m.

5. Ministerial Oral Evidence Session: Withdrawal of DAERA and Local Authority Staff from the ports

The Minister, Mr Poots MLA, and Dr Robert Huey, Chief Veterinary Officer, joined the meeting in Room 30 at 9.40 a.m.

The Minister 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 Department to request sight of the emails referenced during the oral evidence session which relate to staff raising concerns around security issues at the ports.

6. Departmental Oral Briefing: June Monitoring Round and Main Estimates 2021-22

The following departmental officials joined the meeting at 10.18 a.m. by StarLeaf:

David Reid, Finance Director

Roger Downey, Deputy Finance Director

Lynda Lowe, Head of Financial Planning Branch

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

Mr Blair left the meeting at 10.30 a.m.



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The Chairperson left the meeting at 10.34 a.m. The Deputy Chairperson assumed the Chair.

The Chairperson re-joined the meeting at 10.41 a.m. and resumed the Chair.

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their attendance.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content to support the Department's June Monitoring Round and Main Estimates for 2021-22.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request confirmation that provision has been made for resource planning for the forthcoming Executive's Climate Change Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request further information in respect of the access to compensation funding for businesses who have experienced a loss of earnings due to the delays at ports.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request an analysis of any key budgetary pressures anticipated in the current financial year.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request that it liaises with the Department for the Economy on the issue of disparity of charging for rural broadband provision and advises the Committee of the outcome.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to publish the Department's written briefing on the June Monitoring Round and the Main Estimates 2021-22 on the Committee's webpage.

Agreed: The Committee agreed its response to the Committee for Finance on the Budget (No.2) Bill 2021 and agreed that it should issue.

7. Departmental Written Briefing: Draft Consultation on the Protection for Service Animals in Northern Ireland (Finn's Law)

The Committee considered the departmental written briefing on the draft consultation on the Protection for Services Animals in Northern Ireland which proposes that any animals used by the PSNI, NIPS, Harbour, Airport or Military Police, as well as any



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person that exercises the powers of a police constable or is employed for or engaged to provide, a service for police purposes, should have added protection.

The Committee noted that the consultation proposes a substantive change to criminal law and that the Minister has written to the Minister of Justice to seek her comments on the draft consultation document.

Agreed: The Committee to write to the Department to request that it is kept informed of the progress of the draft consultation and to seek an analysis of responses in due course.

8. Correspondence

The Committee noted the following:

- i. Copied correspondence from the House of Lords Sub Committee on the Protocol to Treasury confirming the enforcement of the Delegated Regulation C(2020) 8072 and requesting updates on the assessment of the volume of goods requiring exit/export declarations;
- ii. Correspondence from the Competition and Markets Authority on its public consultation on the proposed functions, role and remit of a new Office for the Internal Market;
- iii. Correspondence from the RSPB and NIEL inviting Committee Members to an online event on 11 June 2021 to discuss how political leaders can show global initiative in the fight to save nature;
- iv. Correspondence from the CAMS Office on Social Media Training for Members and party staff who manage social media accounts, which will take place on three dates in June 2021.

The Committee considered correspondence from the Chairperson of SOLACE NI response to the Committee's correspondence seeking clarification on issues surrounding the investigation into the withdrawal of staff from the ports.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the clerk will acknowledge the letter and advise that it will be taken into consideration during the Committee's consideration of evidence gathered in relation to the withdrawal from staff from the ports.



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9. Forward Work Programme

Noted: The Committee noted that Members should confirm their attendance at the Climate Change Bill stakeholder events on 17 June 2021 to the clerk by close of play.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the Forward Work Programme.

10.AOB

The Chairperson advised the Committee that the debate on the Committee Motion on Nature Friendly Farming has been scheduled for 7 June 2021 and he encouraged all Members to be in attendance and to contribute to the debate.

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 10 June 2021 at 9.30 a.m. and will be a hybrid meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 10.51 a.m.

Declan McAleer MLA

Chairperson, Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee