

COMMITTEE FOR AGRICULTURE, ENVIRONMENT AND RURAL AFFAIRS

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

THURSDAY 7 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 (via StarLeaf)
Ms Trevor Allen, Senior Assistant Clerk
Ms Kate Duffy, Clerical Officer (via StarLeaf)

The meeting commenced in open session at 10.04 a.m.

1. Apologies

None

2. Oral Briefing from LogisticsUK on Operational and practical issues arising from EU Exit

Mr Seamus Leheny of LogisticsUK joined the meeting at 10.06 a.m.:

Mr Leheny briefed the Committee and this was followed by a question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked Mr Leheny for his attendance.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write operational aspects of the first days of EU Exit to a number of organisations including the Trader Support Services; Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, UK Minister Gove; and Rol Minister Hildegard Naughten.

3. Oral Briefing from NI Business Brexit Working Group on Operational and practical issues arising from EU Exit

The following representatives of NI Business Brexit Working Group joined the meeting, via StarLeaf, at 11.16 a.m.:

Mr Aodhan Connolly, The Northern Ireland Business Brexit Working Group
Mr Victor Chestnutt, Ulster Farmers' Union
Mr Wesley Aston, Ulster Farmers' Union

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

Mr Irwin left the meeting at 12.05 p.m.

Mr Irwin rejoined the meeting at 12.08 p.m.

Mr Irwin left the meeting at 12.21 p.m.

The Chairperson thanked the NI Business Brexit Working Group representatives for their attendance.

The meeting adjourned at 12.22 p.m.

Mr Irwin rejoined the meeting at 12.27 p.m.

The meeting resumed at 12:27 p.m.

4. DAERA Briefing on Operational and Practical Issues Arising from EU Exit

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting at 12.27 a.m.:

Dr Denis McMahon, Permanent Secretary
Mr David Small, Deputy Secretary (via StarLeaf)
Mr Robert Huey, Head of Veterinary Services and Animal Health
Mr Norman Fulton, Head of Food and Farming Group (via StarLeaf)
Ms Nicole McArthur, Brexit Contingency Planning Group (via StarLeaf)

The evidence session was reported by Hansard.

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

Mr Irwin left the meeting at 1.21 p.m.

Officials offered to provide the Committee with links to information on goods deemed 'at risk'; to follow up on queries relating to the TSS Hotline; to provide a future briefing on EU Exit implications on Northern Ireland fishing quotas and well as on the IUU Regulations; on the issues raised regarding movement of assistance dogs from GB to NI; and to provide regular updates on developments in relation to the outbreak of avian flu.

The Chairperson thanked officials for their attendance.

5. Any Other Business

The Committee noted that today's Departmental briefing was in place of the scheduled briefing on 14 January and that written Departmental fortnightly updates on EU Exit matters will be scheduled starting from next week.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to HMRC raising its concerns in relation to the rebate system discussed during the evidence sessions; write to the Joint Committee on the Northern Ireland Protocol in relation to concerns regarding travelling with guide dogs and the movement of guide dog pups to Northern Ireland; and to write to DAERA raising concerns around the cost of Support Health Attention documents.

6. 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 14 January 2021 at 10.00 a.m. in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting adjourned at 2.01 p.m.

Declan McAleer, Chairperson, Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development

Date