



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

Minutes of Proceedings

Thursday 14 October 2021

Meeting Location: Room 30/Virtual Meeting via StarLeaf

Present: Philip McGuigan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Present by Video or Teleconference:

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

Apologies: Declan McAleer MLA (Chairperson)

Present: Nick Henry, Clerk
Oliver Bellew, Assistant Clerk
Marion Johnson, Clerical Officer

In Attendance by Video or Teleconference:

Neal Flanagan, Assistant Clerk
Elaine Farrell, Clerical Supervisor



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The meeting commenced at 9.25 a.m. in Open Session

1. Apologies

Declan McAleer MLA (Chairperson)

2. Chairperson's Business

The Deputy Chairperson reminded Members that the Chairperson had offered his apologies for the meeting, due to a family bereavement. The Committee expressed its condolences to the Chairperson.

The Chairperson informed Members that Minister Poots would attend the meeting to brief the Committee on his intention to seek its support for Accelerated Passage for Finn's Law and on the development of the Green Growth Strategy.

The Chairperson reminded Members that the Speaker had offered to issue tickets for COP26 to Members of the Committee.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Speaker to thank him for giving priority to Members for COP26 day passes.

3. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 7 October 2021.

4. Matters Arising

None



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5. Ministerial Briefing, Minister for AERA: Accelerated Passage for Finn's Law and the Green Growth Strategy

The Deputy Chairperson welcomed the Minister, and the following officials, to the meeting at 9.28 a.m.

Kevin Hegarty, DAERA
Tracey Teague, DAERA
Arron Wright, DAERA

The Deputy Chairperson invited the Minister to brief the Committee on the rationale for requesting support for Accelerated Passage for Finn's Law and on the Green Growth Strategy.

Clare Bailey joined the meeting at 10.04 a.m.

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

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department for details of the proposed £600m bid by the Minister to the Department for Finance to support changes brought about by the Green Growth Strategy

6. Written Briefing, DAERA: Statutory Instrument – The Waste and Agriculture (Legislative Functions) Regulations 2021

The Committee considered a written briefing from the Department in relation to a Statutory Instrument, which DEFRA proposes to lay on 18 November 2021.

The Statutory Instrument will allow public authorities in the UK to exercise a number of waste directives previously carried out by the European Commission.

It will also transfer authority to DAERA to carry out a number of technical powers including the making of regulations in respect of sampling landfill waste; making



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provisions in respect of the Mining Waste Directive; prescribing criteria on by-product conditions for specific substances; and, specifying technologies for the storage and treatment of waste vehicles.

7. Oral Briefing, DAERA: Climate Change (No.2) Bill

The Committee noted a Departmental written briefing on the Climate Change (No.2) Bill.

The following officials from DAERA joined the meeting via StarLeaf at 10.33 a.m.

Colin Breen, Director of Environmental Policy Division
Anthony Courtney, Environmental Policy Division
Arlene McGowan, Environmental Policy Division

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

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their attendance.

The Deputy Chairperson reminded Members of comments made during the briefing in respect of enforcement/sanction on Departments if they fail to meet their emissions obligations.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek further information from the Department on the enforcement/sanctions that may be brought about under the Bill and additionally the rationale for Clause 21 which gives DAERA the authority to impose reporting duties on public bodies.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to HM Treasury for clarification on any potential Barnett Consequential repercussions for Northern Ireland, if a target other than that advised by the UK Committee on Climate Change should be legislated for in NI.



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8. Consideration of Draft Report: Horse Racing (Amendment) Bill

Members noted a draft report prepared by the Clerk on the Horse Racing (Amendment) Bill. The Chairperson invited the Committee to proceed through the draft report and to seek Members agreement or comments on each section.

Agreed: The Committee agreed Section 1 of the Horse Racing (Amendment) Bill, as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed Section 2 of the Horse Racing (Amendment) Bill, as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed Section 3 of the Horse Racing (Amendment) Bill, as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed Section 4 of the Horse Racing (Amendment) Bill, as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed Section 5 of the Horse Racing (Amendment) Bill, as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed Section 6 of the Horse Racing (Amendment) Bill, as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed Section 7 of the Horse Racing (Amendment) Bill, as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed Section 8 of the Horse Racing (Amendment) Bill, as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the Horse Racing (Amendment) Bill, as drafted, and agreed that it be published.

Agreed: The Committee agreed a draft Summary Report of the Horse Racing (Amendment) Bill, and agreed that it be published alongside the full report.



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The Chairperson thanked Members for their efforts in progressing the Bill.

9. Correspondence

The Committee noted the following items of correspondence and agreed that they be actioned as follows:

- i. Correspondence from Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce and BDO NI in relation to its Belfast Business Sustainability Survey, which illustrates how businesses within Belfast are considering Climate Change;
Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek a briefing from the Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce and Industry, which would incorporate the views of the Belfast Chamber of Commerce;
- ii. Correspondence from the Chairpersons' Liaison Group, which detailed proposals for new or amended EU laws;
- iii. DAERA correspondence informing the Committee of Dr Neil Rowland's appointment as the Clean Air Champion for Northern Ireland;
- iv. An invitation from the USPCA to launch a report on puppy trade in Northern Ireland, entitled 'Puppy Dog Fortunes';
- v. A copy of correspondence between Minister Poots and the Department of Justice, detailing his support for a register for individuals charged with animal cruelty offences. The correspondence notes the Minister's intention to bring forward proposals before 1st January 2022;
- vi. Response from Farmers for Action in respect of legal queries on the potential introduction of a Farm Welfare Bill;
- vii. An invitation from UFU and DAERA to attend an online Climate Change Conference on 27 October 2021;
- viii. DAERA correspondence regarding its bids to the October 2021 Monitoring Round;
- ix. Correspondence from the Speaker to advise that a "Badger Cull Opposition" public petition was laid on 4 October 2021;
- x. Correspondence from the Speaker to highlight the opportunity for CAERA Members to attend COP26 events in Glasgow;



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Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Speaker to thank him for giving priority to Members for day passes.

10. Forward Work Programme

Agreed: The Committee agreed the Forward Work Programme.

11. Any Other Business

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department, and other relevant stakeholders, for information on what strategies and initiatives it has in place to support and encourage women to take up farm management roles. Members also agreed to ask the Department for information on the status of females in farming.

The Clerk informed Members of an invitation from Peatlands Park, Dungannon to visit its site on the morning of 28 October 2021.

The Chairperson advised that any Member wishing to attend the visit should inform the Committee Office.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to move into Closed Session.

The meeting moved into Closed Session at 11.48 p.m.

12. Closed Session: Climate Change (No.1) Bill Informal Deliberations

The Chairperson informed Members that the Committee would resume informal deliberations on the Climate Change (No.1) Bill and, in particular, miscellaneous clauses and other issues.



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The Chairperson reminded Members that a number of stakeholder groups had suggested that the Preamble to the Bill should be amended to include a specific reference to adaptation.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider an amendment that the Preamble should be changed to read “*A Bill to enable the mitigation and adaptation of the impact of climate change*”.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that Clare Bailey would liaise with the Clerk and Bill officials with regards drafting amendments to Clause 12 in response to queries that were raised by the Department.

The Committee considered a range of issues that were highlighted by stakeholders via its call-for-evidence and how it should address these:

- The potential inclusion of a clause on the development of greenways/green infrastructure;
- The potential need to ensure gender-proofing of climate change mitigation policies;
- The insertion of wording to eliminate the use of fossil fuels; and,
- The establishment of energy efficiency standards of fuel poor homes;
- Reviewing the carbon accounting processes locally so that carbon sequestered on farmland is “credited” to this sector;
- Reviewing the issues and constraints within the planning sector that may inhibit implementation of green infrastructure;
- Taking forward a land strategy to allocate proportionately sufficient land to support carbon sequestration;
- How the public should be educated and supported with regards climate change policy

Agreed: Members agreed that Clare Bailey would bring forward a proposed amendment in respect of gender proofing climate change policies, as part of the “Just Transition” principles in the Bill

Agreed: Members agreed that the remaining issues would be best addressed via recommendations in its Bill report, as opposed to amending the Bill as drafted



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The meeting was suspended at 12.20 p.m.

The meeting resumed at 1.38 p.m. with the following Members in attendance via Starleaf:

Philip McGuigan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Clare Bailey MLA
Rosemary Barton MLA
Harry Harvey MLA
Patsy McGlone MLA

In accordance with Standing Order 115 (6) William Irwin MLA delegated his vote to Harry Harvey MLA and Declan McAleer MLA delegated his vote to the Deputy Chairperson.

13. Oral Briefing – Climate Change (No.2) Bill: Agri-Food Sector

The following representatives of the Agri-food sector joined the meeting via StarLeaf at 1.40 p.m.

Mike Johnston – Dairy UK
David Brown – Ulster Farmers' Union
Aileen Lawson – Ulster Farmers' Union
Ian Stevenson – Livestock and Meat Commission
Conall Donnelly – NI Meat Exporters Association
Gill Gallagher – NI Grain Trade Association

The representatives briefed the Committee on their views of the Climate Change (No.2) Bill.

This was followed by a question and answer session.

The Deputy Chairperson thanked the representatives for the briefing.

The meeting was adjourned at 3.22 p.m.



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14. 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 October 2021 at 10.00 a.m. and will be a hybrid meeting streamed on the Assembly's website.

Declan McAleer, MLA
Chairperson, Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee