



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

THURSDAY, 9 JANUARY 2014

SENATE CHAMBER, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present: Ms Anna Lo MLA (Chairperson)
Mrs Pam Cameron MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Cathal Boylan MLA
Mr Tom Elliott MLA
Mr Alban Maginness MLA
Mr Ian McCrea MLA
Mr Barry McElduff MLA
Lord Morrow MLA
Mr Peter Weir MLA

In Attendance: Mrs Sheila Mawhinney (Assembly Clerk)
Mr Sean McCann (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Neil Sedgewick (Clerical Supervisor)
Ms Antoinette Bowen (Clerical Officer)
Ms Suzie Cave (Research Officer)

Apologies: Mr Colum Eastwood MLA

The meeting commenced in public session at 10:10am

1. Apologies

Apologies were indicated as above.

2. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson referred members to a written Ministerial Statement from the Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development on the transfer of monies from Pillar 1 to Pillar 2 of the budget of the Common Agricultural Policy, and suggested that the Committee should write to the DARD Minister for further information on the agri-environmental scheme to be funded under Pillar 2.

The Committee discussed the suggestion and Mr Peter Weir proposed the following motion, "That the Committee does not write to the DARD Minister regarding the agri-environmental element of Pillar 2".

The motion was seconded by Lord Morrow MLA.

The Committee divided as follows:

AYES: Pam Cameron MLA

Ian McCrea MLA

Lord Morrow MLA

Peter Weir MLA

NOES: Anna Lo MLA

Alban Maginness MLA

ABSTAIN: Cathal Boylan MLA

The motion was carried.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it would not write to the DARD Minister for further information on the agri-environmental element of Pillar 2.

3. Draft Minutes

The minutes from the meeting of 12th December 2013 were agreed.

4. Matters arising

4.1 The Committee noted a Departmental reply to queries raised in relation to the consultation on alcohol on public service vehicles.

4.2 The Committee noted a Departmental response providing further information on the fitment of fire extinguishers in Public Service Vehicles and minibuses.

4.3 The Committee noted a Departmental update on the modernisation of the Road Safety Education Officer Service.

5. Consultation on proposals to amend the Glass Packaging Target

The Committee considered the Departmental consultation document on proposals to amend the Glass Packaging Target.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request a synopsis of responses from the Department.

6. Consultation on the planning agreement between the Department of the Environment and George Best Belfast City airport

The Committee considered the Departmental consultation on the agreement between the Department and George Best Belfast City airport.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request a briefing from the Department on this issue.

Mr McElduff joined the meeting at 10:33am.

7. Proposals for a European Regulation concerning the noise levels of new motor vehicles and UK Regulations implementing EU directives relating to agricultural and forestry tractors.

The Committee noted correspondence regarding Proposals for a European Regulation concerning the noise levels of new motor vehicles and UK Regulations implementing directives relating to agricultural and forestry tractors.

8. SR 2013/285 The Goods Vehicles (Testing) (Amendment No.2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013

Question put and agreed: "The Committee for the Environment has considered the Goods Vehicles (Testing) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013 and has no objection to the Rule, subject to the next report from the Examiner of Statutory Rules."

9. SR 2013/286 The Motor Vehicle Testing (Amendment No. 2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013

Question put and agreed: "The Committee for the Environment has considered the Motor Vehicle Testing (Amendment No. 2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013 and has no objection to the Rule, subject to the next report from the Examiner of Statutory Rules."

10. SR 2013/287 The Road Service Licensing (Community Licences) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013

Question put and agreed: "The Committee for the Environment has considered the Road Service Licensing (Community Licences) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013 and has no objection to the Rule, subject to the next report from the Examiner of Statutory Rules."

11. SR 2013/292 The Smoke Control Areas (Exempted Fireplaces) (No 2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013

Question put and agreed: "The Committee for the Environment has considered the Smoke Control Areas (Exempted Fireplaces) (No 2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013 and has no objection to the Rule, subject to the next report from the Examiner of Statutory Rules."

12. Wind energy inquiry

The Committee considered papers from the APSE event held in Omagh on 12 December 2013.

Agreed: The Committee noted these papers and agreed that they should be included in the final Committee report.

The Committee considered an updated list of relevant stakeholders.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the stakeholders requesting a written submission to the inquiry.

Mr Elliott joined the meeting at 10:44am

13. Assembly Research briefing on the Local Government Bill

The Committee received a briefing from Assembly Research in relation to papers on the use of the call-in procedure; the role of statutory bodies in Community Planning in Scotland; the Single Transferrable Vote model; and the role of the Commissioner for Complaints.

The briefing was recorded by Hansard.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request further research papers on the Local Government Bill.

The Committee considered a request from Belfast City Council to brief the Committee on the Local Government Bill

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule a briefing.

14. Community Places briefing on the Local Government Bill

Colm Bradley (Director, Community Places), Louise McNeill (Planner, Community Places) and Clare McGrath (Community Places) briefed the Committee on the community planning aspects of the Local Government Bill.

Mr McElduff left the meeting at 11:51am

The briefing was recorded by Hansard.

Agreed: The Committee requested further information from Community Places regarding the community planning toolkit and examples of enhanced use of the general power of competence in other jurisdictions.

The Committee discussed the possibility of an evidence-gathering visit to another jurisdiction where the aspects of the Local Government Bill which are to be introduced in Northern Ireland have already been implemented.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that Committee staff should prepare a paper outlining options for a potential visit, as well as other available options such as teleconferencing and inviting representatives from other jurisdictions to brief the Committee.

15. Correspondence

The Committee considered correspondence from Mr Pat Ramsey MLA requesting an opportunity to brief the Committee regarding the Road Traffic (Speed Limits) Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to receive a briefing from Mr Ramsey at a future Committee meeting.

The Committee considered a Departmental response regarding the impending demolition of the Orpheus building in York Street, Belfast.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward a copy of the response to the original correspondent.

The Committee considered correspondence from Committee for Finance and Personnel on the scrutiny of the local budget process 2015/16.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request a briefing from Departmental officials at a future Committee meeting.

The Committee noted the following correspondence

Copy of a Ministerial response to the Committee for Education regarding community access to schools.

Copy of letter to the Minister from QPANI's, expressing concerns at the continuing loss of staff from the Strategic Planning Unit.

Copy of a letter sent to the Department by the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development in relation to Marine Conservation Zones and a copy of the Departmental response.

Correspondence from the Finance and Personnel Committee regarding outstanding Post Project Evaluations.

Update regarding a proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a framework for Marine Spatial Planning and Integrated Coastal Management.

Correspondence from the Women's Ad Hoc Policy Group regarding the date set for the Committee's Local Government Stakeholder Forum.

Ministerial correspondence on an Article 31 application – intention to approve the redevelopment of Casement Park and gasification plant at Bombardier Aerospace.

Departmental letter regarding the publication of the Second State of the Environment Report.

Copy of Advance Notice for Consultation letters and lists of Policies screened out for EQIA by the Department.

Departmental update on current Article 31 planning applications up to December 2013.

Copy of December DOE – Investment for NI Investing Activity Report.

Copy of Friend of the Earth NI report 'No fracking way'.

16. Forward Work Programme

The Committee noted the forward work programme.

17. Any Other Business

No business was discussed.

18. Date, time and place of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on 16th January 2014 at 10:00am in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12:24pm

Anna Lo, MLA
Chairperson, Committee for the Environment
16 January 2014