



**Northern Ireland  
Assembly**

**COMMITTEE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT**

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

**THURSDAY, 14 NOVEMBER 2013**

**SENATE CHAMBER, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

- Present: Ms Anna Lo MLA (Chairperson)  
Ms Pam Brown MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr Cathal Boylan MLA  
Mr Tom Elliott MLA  
Mr Ian McCrea MLA  
Lord Morrow MLA  
Mr Ian Milne 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 Roisin Kelly (Assembly Bill Clerk – item 1 only)  
Ms Suzie Cave (Assembly Research officer – item 11)
- Apologies: Mr Barry McElduff MLA

*The meeting commenced in closed session at 10:04am.*

**1. Bill Office briefing on the Carrier Bags Bill**

*Lord Morrow joined the meeting at 10:07am.*

*Mr Milne joined the meeting at 10:19am.*

Ms Roisin Kelly (Assembly Bill Office) briefed the Committee in closed session regarding the Carrier Bags Bill and the options available to specify the commencement of the Bill.

*Agreed: The Committee agreed to request a draft amendment from the Bill Office to extend the commencement date following Royal Assent. The Committee also agreed to consult with the Northern Ireland Retail Consortium regarding the proposed amendment.*

*Agreed: The Committee agreed to reconsider the rationale of having a three year review period for the Bill.*

*Lord Morrow left the meeting at 10:30am.*

*The meeting moved into in public session at 10:34am.*

## **2. Apologies**

Apologies were indicated as above.

*Mr Weir left the meeting at 10:36am*

*Mr Elliott joined the meeting at 10:38am*

## **3. Chairperson's Business**

The Chairperson referred members to a letter from the Speaker in relation to a public petition on the proposed closure of Exploris.

The Chairperson advised members that Community Places has requested a meeting with her to discuss the Local Government Bill.

*Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite Community Places to attend the stakeholder event scheduled for 28<sup>th</sup> November.*

*Mr Weir re-joined the meeting at 10:40am*

The Chairperson discussed with members the recent meeting with the Permanent Secretary and senior officials, which was held on Tuesday 12 November 2013.

## **4. Draft Minutes**

The minutes from the meeting of 7<sup>th</sup> November 2013 were agreed.

## **5. Matters Arising**

5.1 The Committee discussed a Departmental reply regarding unsuccessful bids under the October Monitoring Round.

*Agreed: The Committee agreed to confirm which councils had applied for funding under the Dereliction Improvement Fund.*

5.2 The Committee noted a Departmental response outlining a timetable for the implementation of the Taxis Act 2008 and the related regulations.

*Agreed: The Committee agreed to request a briefing from the DVA Enforcement Section in relation to taxi legislation.*

*Mr Milne left the meeting at 10:59am*

5.3 The Committee noted a Departmental reply regarding future Marine workshops.

5.4 The Committee noted a Ministerial letter regarding the recent meeting held with DFT on the future of DVA jobs in Coleraine.

## **6. Consultation on further European changes to driving licences and driving test requirements**

The Committee considered a synopsis of responses to the consultation on further European changes to driving licences and driving test requirements.

*Agreed: The Committee was content for the Department to proceed in making these Regulations.*

## **7. Consultation on the draft Fluorinated Greenhouse Gases (Amendment) Regulations**

The Committee considered a synopsis of responses to the consultation on the draft Fluorinated Greenhouse Gases (Amendment) Regulations.

*Agreed: The Committee was content for the Department to proceed in making these Regulations.*

## **8. SL1 - The Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013**

The Committee considered an SL1 proposal to make the Statutory Rule, The Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013.

*Agreed: The Committee was content for the Department to proceed to make the Rule.*

## **9. Wind Energy Inquiry**

The Committee considered the Terms of Reference for the Review to establish if these were appropriate for the Inquiry.

*Lord Morrow re-joined the meeting at 11:05am*

*Agreed: The Committee agreed to specify Environmental Impact Assessments within the first Term of Reference. The Committee also agreed to write to the ETI Committee to ascertain if the second Term of Reference overlaps with their work area.*

*Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to request details of the percentage of renewable energy generated by wind turbines in Northern Ireland.*

*Mr Boylan left the meeting at 11:09am*

The Committee considered a draft list of stakeholders from which written submissions will be requested.

*Agreed: The Committee was content with the proposed list of stakeholders and requested that Prof Geraint Ellis be added. The Committee was content with the deadline for written submissions to be set for 28 February 2014.*

*Agreed: the Committee was content for papers previously considered as part of the Review also be included as part of the Inquiry.*

*Mr Boylan re-joined the meeting at 11:15am*

*Mr Milne re-joined the meeting at 11:15am.*

*Mr McCrea left the meeting at 11:24am.*

## **10. Departmental briefing on the synopsis of responses to the consultation on the Review of the Local Government Staff Commission**

Liz Loughran (Acting Director of Local Government Division) and Greg Cunningham (Deputy Principal, Local Government Policy Division) briefed the Committee on the synopsis of responses to the Local Government Staff Commission.

*Mr Boylan left the meeting at 11:26am*

The Committee also noted a letter from the Chief Executive of the Local Government Staff Commission.

The main areas discussed were the rationale for the decisions made following the consultation and the next steps in the process including the potential amendment to the Local Government Bill

*Agreed: The Committee agreed to request details of the proposed amendment to the Local Government Bill when drafted by the Department.*

*Mr Boylan re-joined the meeting at 11:37am*

## **11. Assembly Research briefing on the Local Government Bill**

A representative of Assembly Research and Information Service provided the Committee with an overview of the Local Government Bill.

The briefing was recorded by Hansard.

The main areas discussed were the community planning aspect of the Bill, qualified majority and examples of the general power of competence contained in the Bill.

*Mr McCrea re-joined the meeting at 11:56am.*

*Agreed: The Committee agreed to request further information on the Bill from Assembly Research.*

*Agreed: The Committee agreed that all stakeholders who had submitted responses to its call for evidence on the Bill should be invited to attend the Stakeholder Forum on 28 November 2013.*

## **12. Correspondence**

The Committee considered a letter from the Marine Task Force requesting an opportunity to brief the Committee regarding the Marine Conservation Zone Designation process.

*Agreed: The Committee agreed to arrange an informal meeting with representatives from the Marine Task Force.*

The Committee noted the following correspondence:

Departmental letter providing advance notice of Consultations and list of Policies screened out for Equality Impact Assessment by the Department.

Invitation from the Committee for Employment & Learning to attend a Higher Education Showcase Event.

Invitation from Dathí McKay MLA to attend Private Members Bill Launch.

**13. Forward Work Programme**

The Committee noted the forward work programme.

**14. Any Other Business**

No other business was discussed.

**15. Date, time and place of next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2013 at 10:00am in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

*The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12:13pm*

**Anna Lo, MLA**  
**Chairperson, Committee for the Environment**  
**21 November 2013**