



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

THURSDAY, 16 JANUARY 2014

SENATE CHAMBER, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

- Present: Ms Anna Lo MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Cathal Boylan MLA
Mr Colum Eastwood MLA
Mr Tom Elliott MLA
Mr Alban Maginness MLA
Mr Ian McCrea MLA
Mr Barry McElduff MLA
Mr Ian Milne 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)
- Apologies: Mrs Pam Cameron MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

The meeting commenced in public session at 10:12am

1. Apologies

Apologies were indicated as above.

2. Chairperson's Business

No business was discussed.

3. Draft Minutes

The minutes from the meeting of 9th January 2014 were agreed.

4. Matters arising

4.1 The Committee considered a Departmental reply regarding the progress of the formation of an AONB management body for the Sperrins.

Mr McCrea joined the meeting at 10:15am

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to ask if consultation has been carried out with statutory bodies in the Sperrins AONB area on planning applications, and also if the Draperstown Partnership will be included in future consultations in this area.

4.2 The Committee noted the draft minutes for the Local Government Bill sub Committee meeting held on 7th January 2014.

Mr Eastwood joined the meeting at 10:17am

4.3 The Committee noted the DOE Work Programme from January to April 2014.

Mr McCrea left the meeting at 10.18 am.

4.4 The Committee noted the latest report from the Examiner of Statutory Rules.

Mr McCrea rejoined the meeting at 10.20 am.

4.5 The Committee noted a Northern Ireland Audit Office response to queries raised regarding the Local Government Bill.

5. Consultation on secondary legislation relating to the HGV Road User Levy Act 2013

The Committee considered the consultation on secondary legislation relating to the HGV Road User levy Act 2013.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request a briefing from the Department once the synopsis of responses is available.

6. SL1 – The Taxis (Taximeters and Fares) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014

The Committee considered a SL1 proposal for the implementation of taxi meters and taxi fares.

Agreed: The Committee deferred the SL1 for further consideration.

7. SR 2013/298 The Motor Vehicles (Driving Licences) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013

Mr Elliott joined the meeting at 10:27am

Question put and agreed: 'The Committee for the Environment has considered SR 2013 No. 298, The Motor Vehicles (Driving Licences) (Amendment No.2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013, and has no objection to the Rule.'

8. Local Government Bill – Briefing from the Commissioner for Complaints

Dr Tom Frawley (Commissioner for Complaints), Ms Marie Anderson (Deputy NI Ombudsman) and Ms Gillian Coey briefed the Committee regarding the Local Government Bill.

The main areas discussed were the need for an appeal mechanism and the cost implications. The comparative complaints models in Scotland and Wales were also discussed.

Mr Weir joined the meeting at 11:34am

The briefing was recorded by Hansard.

9. Local Government Bill – Departmental briefing on the draft Code of Conduct for Northern Ireland Councillors

Ms Linda McHugh (Director, Local Government Policy Division), Ms Julie Broadway (G7. Local Government Policy Division), Mr John Murphy (Local Government Policy Division), Ms Mylene Ferguson (Local Government Policy Division), Ms Beverly Cowan (Local Government Policy Division) and Ms Fiona McGrady (Local Government Policy Division) briefed the Committee regarding the draft Code of Conduct for Northern Ireland Councillors.

The main areas discussed were the details of the draft code of conduct and the areas in which this code is to be applied.

The briefing was recorded by Hansard.

Mr Eastwood left the meeting at 12:09pm.

Members discussed extending evidence gathering on the Bill to other jurisdictions and considered an option paper detailing several recommendations.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider a visit to other jurisdictions to look at elements such as planning, the changing role of councillors, community planning and performance improvement, after the end of the 2nd Stage of the Bill to facilitate its scrutiny of relevant subordinate legislation and statutory guidance.

10. Briefing by EU Desk Officer

Mr Wesley Shannon (Environmental Protection Division), Mr Tim Irwin (Environmental Policy Division) and Mr Keith Brown (Barroso Task Force Climate Change and Energy Desk Officer) briefed the Committee in relation to the work of the EU Desk Officer.

The main areas discussed were the promotion of effective engagement with the EU by organisations from Northern Ireland, and the communication of the funding opportunities available to these organisations

Mr Elliott left the meeting at 12:23pm

Lord Morrow left the meeting at 12:42pm

Agreed: The Committee agreed that a draft response to the OFMdFM Committee's request for the Committee's views on its European priorities for the year ahead to be prepared and brought back to the Committee for agreement at a future meeting.

11. Correspondence

The Committee considered an invitation from NILGA to attend its annual conference.

Agreed: The Committee requested that further information regarding the conference should be emailed to members.

The Committee noted the following correspondence

Letter from Alastair Ross MLA informing the Committee of his intention to bring forward a Private Members Bill. Clause 1 will amend the Road Traffic (NI) Order 1981.

Copy of Derry Journal article – “Give Walls the boost needed for World Heritage Site Status”.

Copy of correspondence from the Education Committee to the Department regarding compliance of Republic of Ireland school transport providers with the NI Vehicle Licensing regime.

Correspondence regarding wind turbines, pylons and substations.

Invitation from Mr Roy Beggs MLA for members to attend a consultation event in parliament Buildings on The Scrap Metal Dealers (NI) Private Members Bill.

12. Forward Work Programme

The Committee noted the forward work programme.

13. Any Other Business

No business was discussed.

14. Date, time and place of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on 23rd January 2014 at 10:00am in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12.55 pm.

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