



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**THURSDAY 27 JUNE 2013,
SILVERBIRCH HOTEL, OMAGH**

- Present: Ms Anna Lo MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Sydney Anderson MLA
Mr Cathal Boylan MLA
Mr Tom Elliott MLA
Mr Barry McElduff 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: Mr Simon Hamilton MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mrs Dolores Kelly MLA
Mr Ian Milne MLA
Lord Morrow MLA

The meeting began in public session at 11:36am.

1. Apologies

Apologies were indicated as above.

2. Chairpersons Business

2.1 The Committee noted a report of the Chairperson's recent meeting with NIMEA and Dairy UK in relation to proposed climate change legislation for Northern Ireland.

2.2 The Committee considered a draft press release giving details of the Committee visit to Omagh.

Agreed: The Committee was content for the press release to be published following minor amendments.

2.3 The Committee considered correspondence from the Northern Ireland Renewables Industry Group (NIRIG) requesting an opportunity to brief the Committee in September.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the group, expressing its disappointment that representatives were unavailable to brief members at the current meeting, but was content for a briefing to be scheduled after recess.

Mr Elliott left the meeting at 11:45am

2.4 The Committee considered the Carriers Bags Bill Delegated Powers Memorandum.

Agreed: The Committee was content to forward the Memorandum to the Examiner of Statutory Rules for comment.

2.5 The Committee noted information regarding the roll out of tablet devices to members.

3. Minutes

The minutes from the meeting of 20th June 2013 were agreed.

Mr Elliott re-joined the meeting at 11:48am

4. Matters Arising

4.1 The Committee noted a Departmental reply in relation to Council powers for the removal of asbestos.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to ask if the Department feels the current legislation on removal of asbestos is sufficient, and for further information on the relevant guidance given to Councils on Health and Safety.

4.2 The Committee noted a Departmental reply in relation to the Cross Departmental Working Group on Lough Neagh.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to ask for a copy of the Working Group's final report when this is available. The Committee also agreed to ask if there would be potential overlap of work with the Working Group if an inquiry into Lough Neagh's water quality was carried out.

4.3 The Committee noted a Departmental reply in relation to road safety on rural roads.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to refer this response to the Ambulance Service and Policing Board to ascertain if they are aware of any potential disparity in records relating to collisions on rural roads.

4.4 The Committee noted a Departmental update on EU developments in relation to transport.

4.5 The Committee noted a Departmental letter in relation to a consultation on alcohol on public service vehicles.

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

4.6 The Committee noted a Departmental reply in relation to the closure notice served to City Waste.

5. Consultation on Controlled Waste (Seizure of Property) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013

Agreed: The Committee was content to write to the Department to request a copy of the synopsis of responses.

6. SL1 – Controlled Waste and Duty of Care Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013

Agreed: That the Committee is content for the Department to proceed to make the Statutory Rule.

7. SL1 – Single Tier Taxi Licensing

Agreed: That the Committee is content for the Department to proceed to make the Statutory Rule, and welcomed the Department's decision to delay the date on which the Rule will come into operation until September 2014.

8. West Tyrone Against Wind Farms Briefing

Dr Dan Kane, Professor Alun Evans, Mr John Peacocke and Mr Peter Sweetman briefed the Committee in relation to wind farms in the West Tyrone area and the concerns of local residents.

The main areas of discussion were the concerns regarding the number of turbines/wind farms in the area, the noise generated by turbines and the ineffectiveness of existing policy in regard to planning applications for these sites.

9. Correspondence

The Committee agreed to move to agenda item 10.

The Committee considered correspondence from Belfast City Airport Watch (BCAW) seeking sight of correspondence from George Best City Airport relating to BCAW.

Agreed: The Committee was content to forward the correspondence to BCAW as requested.

The Committee considered correspondence from the Finance and Personnel Committee providing an analysis of forecasting data performance for each Department.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to refer this to the Department for comment on the relevant data.

The Committee considered correspondence from the Department notifying the Committee of the publication of (Draft) Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) specific to Anaerobic Digestion (AD) for public consultation from 17 June 2013 until 9 September 2013.

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

The Committee noted the following correspondence:

Letter from the USPC calling for the re-designation of existing AONB's to the status of National Parks.

Copy of most recent correspondence from the Westminster EU Sub-Committee on Agriculture, Fisheries, Environment and Energy, regarding the proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal management.

Departmental letter regarding the publication of the final version of Planning Policy (PPS 16) Tourism.

Departmental letter regarding the publication on 3 May 2013 of the Driver & Vehicle Agency Compendium of Key Statistics 2012/13.

10. Forward Work Programme

The Committee agreed to move to agenda item 11.

Members noted the Committee's Forward Work Programme.

11. Date, time and place of next meeting

The Committee agreed to move to agenda item 12.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 4th July 2013 at 10:00am in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

12. Omagh and Strabane Councils Joint Working Group briefing on Wind Energy

The Committee returned to agenda item 9.

Councillor Daniel Kelly (Strabane District Council), Councillor Kieran McGuire (Strabane District Council), Councillor Sean Clarke (Omagh District Council)

and Councillor Charles Chittick (Omagh District council) briefed the Committee on the work of their Joint Working Group.

The main areas of discussion were the lack of community consultation when installing turbines/wind farms, issues with the community benefits offered by companies and the need for a joined up approach in the Assembly for dealing with community concerns.

Mr Elliott left the meeting at 13:23pm

Agreed: The Group agreed to forward information to the Committee in relation to meetings they have held with Ministers. The Group also agreed to forward information on the impact of the implementation of the Clean Neighbourhoods Bill for the Committee's information.

Agreed: The Committee was content to forward the briefing paper from the Joint Working Group to a number of relevant Departments for comment.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 13:44pm.

Anna Lo, MLA
Chairperson, Committee for the Environment
4th July 2013