



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

THURSDAY, 3 APRIL 2014

SENATE CHAMBER, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present: Ms Anna Lo MLA (Chairperson)
Mrs Pam Cameron MLA (Deputy 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
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 Jennifer McCullough (Clerical Officer)

Apologies: Mr Ian Milne MLA

The meeting began in public session at 10:08.

1. Apologies

Apologies were indicated as above.

2. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson advised members that Mr McElduff had recently had a family bereavement.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward a letter of condolence to Mr McElduff.

The Chairperson discussed the recent Committee visit to Edinburgh and Dundee and some of the learning points from the trip.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to send formal letter of thanks to all who facilitated the visit.

3. Draft minutes

The minutes from the meeting held on 20th March 2014 were agreed.

4. Matters arising

4.1 The Committee considered a Departmental reply regarding taxi signs.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the response to the North West Taxi Proprietors who raised the issue.

4.2 The Committee noted replies from the Department and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development regarding the impact of CAP reform on planning policy.

4.3 The Committee considered a reply from Belfast City Council detailing situations which may give rise to call-in.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward a copy of the correspondence to the Department for information.

4.4 The Committee considered a Departmental reply in relation to capacity building and training for the introduction of the local government Code of Conduct.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request specific information on how it intends to deliver the training outlined.

Mr Eastwood left the meeting at 10.21

4.5 The Committee considered a Departmental reply providing details of sickness absence in DOE.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department for further information on how this issue is being addressed.

4.6 The Committee considered an email regarding DVA job redeployment.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward a copy of the email to the Department for comment.

4.7 The Committee considered a Departmental update on the implementation of recommendations from the Committee inquiry report into used tyre disposal.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request continued updates on this issue.

4.8 The Committee noted a Departmental response on the MCZ Workshop report.

4.9 The Committee considered a Departmental reply regarding the Institute of Acoustics Good Practice Guide on Wind Turbine Noise.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to include the reply in its Inquiry report, and to forward a copy to Windwatch for information.

4.10 The Committee considered a letter from Fonacab and Value Cabs regarding Single Tier Taxi Licensing. The Committee also noted the 4200 postcard responses from taxi customers in support of single tier licensing.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to Fonacab and Value Cabs to thank them for their correspondence.

Mr Weir left the meeting at 10.34

5. Synopsis of responses to consultation on draft supplementary planning guidance to PPS 18 on Anaerobic Digestion

The Committee considered the synopsis of responses to the consultation on draft supplementary planning guidance to PPS 18 on Anaerobic Digestion.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department asking for further information on the steps taken to assess the impact on local communities. The Committee also requested that the Department advise the Committee when the final version is published.

Mr Boylan left the meeting at 10.38

6. Synopsis of responses to consultation on UNECE Regulation 129 – Enhanced Child Restraint Systems

The Committee considered the synopsis of responses to the consultation on UNECE Regulation 129 – Enhanced Child Restraint Systems.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request further information on steps taken by the Department to encourage parents to utilise existing child restraints; and for further information on the financial impact of the introduction of enhanced child restraint systems. The Committee was content for the Department to proceed in making the regulations.

Mr Boylan re-joined the meeting at 10.40

7. Synopsis of responses to consultation on Revised Draft PPS 15 Planning and Flood Risk

The Committee considered the synopsis of responses to the consultation on Revised Draft PPS 15 Planning and Flood Risk.

Agreed: The Committee was content for the Department to advise the Committee when the final version is published.

Mr Weir re-joined the meeting at 10.45.

8. Synopsis of responses to consultation on EC Regulation on bus and coach passenger rights

The Committee considered the synopsis of responses to the consultation on EC Regulation on bus and coach passenger rights.

Agreed: The Committee was content for the Department to proceed in making the policy.

Mr Eastwood re-joined the meeting at 10.47.

9. Discussion document on Environmental Legislation – Dilapidated and Dangerous Buildings and Neglected Sites

The Committee considered the discussion document on Environmental legislation regarding Dilapidated and Dangerous Buildings and Neglected Sites.

Agreed: The Committee welcomed this document and agreed to request a copy of the synopsis of responses from the Department.

10. Rural Community Transport Partnerships briefing on Bus Operator Licensing

Anita Flanagan (Fermanagh Community Transport), Billy Moore (North Coast Community Transport) and Paddy McEldowney (Easilink Community Transport) briefed the Committee regarding Bus Operator Licensing.

Mr Elliott joined the meeting at 11.01.

Mr McElduff joined the meeting at 11.01.

The main areas discussed were the provision and demand for services in rural areas, the categorisation of community transport groups and the checks carried out on volunteer drivers.

Mr Weir left the meeting at 11.18.

11. Departmental briefing on Bus Operator Licensing

Ian Greenway (Principal Officer, Road Safety and Vehicle Regulation Division) and Sharon Clements (Deputy Principal Officer, Road Safety and Vehicle Regulation Division) briefed the Committee regarding Bus Operator Licensing.

The main areas discussed were the legal position regarding the classification of community transport groups, EU legislation regarding this issue, and the permits applied to certain minibuses.

The Chairperson left the meeting at 12.37.

The Deputy Chairperson took the chair at 12.37.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request legal advice to clarify the details and implication of a ruling of the European Court in relation to Bus Operator Licensing. The Committee also agreed to ask the Department for further information on the position of volunteer car drivers.

Mr Boylan left the meeting at 12.44.

Mr Eastwood left the meeting at 12.49.

12. Correspondence

The Committee considered correspondence regarding the Dalradian Gold Mine Planning application from a member of the public.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the Department for comment, and to advise the correspondent that his request for a meeting would be considered after these comments had been received.

The Committee considered a Departmental reply to issues raised by Castlereagh Borough Council in relation to a planning application at Lower Carrowreagh Road, Dundonald.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward a copy of the response to Castlereagh Borough Council for information.

The Committee considered correspondence from St Mark's Church regarding minibus brake test frequency and the weight restriction for drivers without D1 on licences.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the Department for comment.

The Committee considered a report from the British Retail Consortium setting out the retail sector's environmental achievements and ambitions.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule a briefing on this report at a future Committee meeting.

Mr Boylan re-joined the meeting at 12.51.

The Committee considered correspondence from Donegal Truckers expressing their concerns regarding the financial impact on hauliers of the introduction of the Road User Levy.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the Department

The Committee considered a Departmental reply in relation to opposition to a planning application from Carn Valley residents.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward a copy of the reply to the original correspondents.

The Committee considered correspondence from a member of the public regarding opposition to proposed Greywacke Quarry in Lisburn, Broadmills area.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the Department for comment.

The Committee considered a report from ISNI on DOE's Capital Projects.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to ask for an update on funding allocated to the North West Region Waste Management group procurement exercise.

The Committee considered a memo from the Regional Development Committee regarding their Inquiry into the Benefits of Cycling.

Agreed: The Committee was content for Committee staff to draft a response.

The Committee noted the following correspondence:

A Departmental update on roadworthiness proposals.

Correspondence regarding a Sunday Post article on a probe into wind turbines and the link with environmental damage.

Correspondence regarding the HGV road levy and the impact on Irish Hauliers.

Copy of an online bulletin from Climate Northern Ireland considering environmental items.

Correspondence from the Justice Committee regarding council responsibilities within the Local Government Bill.

Correspondence from the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee regarding the Reservoirs Bill.

Copy of a report from the Intergovernmental Climate Change Panel.

Correspondence from Sustrans on the Role of Sustainable transport in sustaining local economies.

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 10th April 2014 at 10:00am in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

The Deputy Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 13:10.

Anna Lo, MLA
Chairperson, Committee for the Environment
10 April 2014