



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

THURSDAY, 5 DECEMBER 2013

SENATE CHAMBER, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

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

The meeting commenced in public session at 10.04am

1. Apologies

Apologies were indicated as above.

2. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson advised members of the proposed list of recipients for the Committee's electronic Christmas cards.

Agreed: The Committee was content for the cards to be issued to these stakeholders.

3. Draft Minutes

The minutes from the meetings of 26th and 28th November 2013 were agreed.

4. Departmental briefing on the Consultation on Draft Guidance on Selection and Designation of Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) in Northern Ireland Inshore Region

Damian Campbell (Director, Marine Division), Joe Breen (Deputy Principal, Marine Division) and Ken Bradley (Grade 7, Planning and Environmental Policy Division) briefed the Committee on the process to be followed by the Department in its consultation process for MCZs and reported on the stakeholder workshop which was held on 7 November 2013.

Ms Brown joined the meeting at 10:16am

Mr Milne joined the meeting at 10:22am

Mr McCrea joined the meeting at 10:37am

Mr Elliott joined the meeting at 10:44am

The main areas discussed were the environmental and stakeholder concerns to be addressed in the designation of MCZs and the issues arising when marine areas also fall within the jurisdiction of the Republic of Ireland.

M Eastwood left the meeting at 10:52am

The Committee moved to agenda item 6.

5. Consultation on alcohol on public service vehicles: synopsis of responses

The Committee considered the synopsis of responses relating to the Departmental consultation on alcohol on public service vehicles.

Agreed: The Committee was content for the Department to implement the proposed changes. The Committee also agreed to write to the Department for clarification on the types of buses that this consultation applies to.

Mr Eastwood re-joined the meeting at 11:00

The Committee returned to agenda item 5.

6. Briefing by Lord Deben, Chairman of the Committee on Climate Change

Lord Deben (Chairman, UK Committee on Climate Change) and Ms Ute Collier (Team Leader at Committee on Climate Change) briefed the Committee on the role and work of the Committee on Climate Change.

The main areas discussed were the measures being implemented by industry to combat climate change, the scientific evidence supporting climate change and the work of the Committee on Climate Change.

Mr Boylan left the meeting at 12:01pm

7. Consultation on Significant Water Management Issues

The Committee considered the consultation on Significant Water Management Issues which is to commence on 22 December 2013.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request a copy of the synopsis of responses to the consultation.

Mr Boylan re-joined the meeting at 12:02pm

8. SL1 – The Smoke Control Areas (Exempted Fireplaces) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014

The Committee considered a proposal to make the Statutory Rule, the Smoke Control Areas (Exempted Fireplaces) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014.

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

9. Departmental reply regarding the SL1 Fitment of fire extinguishers in Public Service Vehicles and minibuses.

The Committee considered a Departmental reply regarding the Fitment of fire extinguishers in Public Service Vehicles and minibuses. The Committee had deferred consideration of these Regulations, pending further clarification from the Department on some outstanding issues.

Agreed: The Committee was content for the Department to proceed in making the Statutory Rules, The Public Service (Conditions of Fitness, Equipment and Use) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014 and The Motor Vehicles (Construction and Use) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014

Agreed: The Committee also agreed to write to the Department to ask if there have been any instances when a fire occurred in a public service vehicle or minibus, and the existing fire extinguishers on the vehicle proved inadequate to deal with the incident.

10. SR 2013/260 The Controlled Waste (Seizure of Property) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013

The Committee considered SR 2013/260 The Controlled Waste (Seizure of Property) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013.

Question put and agreed:

The Committee for the Environment has considered SR 2013/260 The Controlled Waste (Seizure of Property) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013 and has no objection to the Rule, subject to the next report from the Examiner of Statutory Rules.

11. SR 2013/262 The Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013

The Committee considered SR 2013/262 the Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013.

Question put and agreed:

The Committee for the Environment has considered SR 2013/262 The Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) (Amendment) regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013 and has no objection to the Rule, subject to the next report from the Examiner of Statutory Rules.

12. NILGA briefing on the Local Government Bill

Derek McCallan (Chief Executive), Alderman Arnold Hatch, Councillor Sean McPeake and Councillor Myreve Chambers briefed the Committee on the Local Government Bill.

The main areas discussed were community planning, partnership planning, qualified majority voting and call in procedures.

The briefing was recorded by Hansard.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to arrange a further meeting with NILGA to discuss the Bill in more detail.

13. NIPSA briefing on the Local Government Bill

Bumper Graham (Assistant General Secretary) and Pat Baker (Chairperson, NIPSA Local Government Panel) briefed the Committee on the Local Government Bill.

The main areas discussed were the protection and interests of staff involved in the changes proposed by the Bill. A further area of discussion was the potential for conflict of Council staff were elected to their employing council.

Mr Weir left the meeting at 1:27pm

Mr Eastwood left the meeting at 1:37pm

The Chairperson left the meeting and the Deputy Chairperson assumed the chair at 1:37pm

The briefing was recorded by Hansard.

14. Matters Arising

14.1 The Committee considered a draft press release regarding the Carrier Bags Bill

Agreed: The Committee was content for the press release to be issued once the report on the Carrier Bags Bill is published.

14.2 The Committee noted a Departmental reply indicating that the Department would provide the wording of an amendment to the Local Government Bill, allowing the Local Government Staff Commission to be wound up, before the end of the Committee stage of the Bill.

14.3 The Committee noted a Departmental reply to Committee queries regarding the Protocol for the Care of Government Historic Estate.

14.4 The Committee noted a Departmental reply in response to a request for further information on the proposed HGV Road User Levy Scheme.

14.5 The Committee noted a Departmental reply regarding the appointment process for the new Council Chief Executive Posts.

14.6 The Committee noted a Departmental letter enclosing guidance issued to councils for the appointment of Deputy Returning Officers.

15. Wind Energy Inquiry

The Committee deferred consideration of information pertaining to the Wind Energy Inquiry until its next meeting scheduled for 12th December 2013

16. Correspondence

The Committee noted the following correspondence:

Letter from the Minister of the Environment giving an update on the timescale for recommendations of the Joint Working Group on Archaeological Archives to be issued.

Copy of correspondence forwarded to the Minister by the Committee for Education regarding Community Access to Schools.

Copy of DOE Investment Strategy for NI – Investing Activity Report – November 2013.

Copy of Hansard transcripts of the ‘Future of Exploris’ meeting held by the ETI Committee on 23 October 2013.

Overview of discussions at the November 2013 UN Climate Change talks in Warsaw.

Copy of the Department’s response to the Regional Development Committee’s queries on Bus Operator Licensing.

Copy of correspondence sent to the Department by the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee seeking information in relation to the Cross Departmental Working Group on Lough Neagh.

Copy of 'Reform Inform' – issue 15.

Copy of Air Quality Summary Report for Northern Ireland 2013.

Copy of the Ministerial response to the Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure on Road Safety for Cyclists.

Letter from the NI Women's European Platform regarding the Local Government Stakeholder Forum.

17. Forward Work Programme

The Committee noted the forward work programme.

18. Any Other Business

No other business was discussed.

19. Date, time and place of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 12th December 2013 at 10:00am in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 13:54pm

**Anna Lo, MLA
Chairperson, Committee for the Environment
12 December 2013**