



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

THURSDAY, 27 NOVEMBER 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 Ian McCrea MLA
Mr Alban Maginness MLA
Mr Barry McElduff MLA
Mr Ian Milne MLA
Lord Morrow MLA
Mrs Sandra Overend MLA
Mr Peter Weir MLA

In Attendance: Ms Sheila Mawhinney (Assembly Clerk)
Mr Mark McQuade (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Neil Sedgewick (Clerical Supervisor)

Apologies: None

The meeting began in public session at 10.08 am.

1. Apologies

No apologies were received.

2. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson advised members that Northern Ireland Environment Link had provided a suggested guest list for the New Year Reception being arranged in conjunction with that organisation.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the guest list.

Mrs Cameron joined the meeting at 10.11am.

The Chairperson referred members to an invitation for her to speak at the 2015 Northern Ireland Renewable Industry Group conference.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Chairperson would speak at the conference on behalf of the Committee.

The Chairperson advised members that ReNEW had requested that the Committee report on the visit to the VITO and Metabolon recycling sites should be made public.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to publish the report on the Assembly website.

The Chairperson reminded the Committee that the Minister would be giving evidence at its next meeting and advised that any further items that members wished to add to the agenda should be communicated to staff as soon as possible.

3. Minutes

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

4. Matters Arising

The Committee considered a letter from the Northern Ireland Renewable Industry Group providing further information on issues discussed during its oral briefing.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to include the correspondence in the report on its inquiry into Wind Energy.

The Committee noted a report on Belgian Waste and Recycling Solutions provided by ReNEW.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Department regarding the designation of sites for the protection of Harbour Porpoises.

The Committee considered correspondence from a member of the Green Party regarding the Dalradian site in the Sperrin Mountains, Co Tyrone.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the Department seeking its views on the issues raised.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Department enclosing a report on research findings on the effectiveness of a recent anti-speeding campaign.

Mr Milne joined the meeting at 10.20am.

Mr Boylan joined the meeting at 10.20am.

Mr McCrea joined the meeting at 10.20am.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Department regarding the outcome of the consultation on the draft PPS22 on affordable housing.

5. Consultations

The Committee noted a consultation on the Commissioner's draft guidance on the NI Local Government Code of Conduct for Councillors.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request a synopsis of responses from the NI Commissioner for Complaints once available.

The Committee noted a Departmental consultation on proposed 'Consolidated' Conservation Regulations.

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

Mr Boylan left the meeting at 10.21am

Lord Morrow left the meeting at 10.21am.

Mr McElduff left the meeting at 10.21am.

6. Synopsis of responses to the consultation on complying with the 3rd Driving Licence Directive.

The Committee considered a synopsis of responses to the consultation on Complying with the 3rd Driving Licence Directive.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content for the Department to proceed with this legislation.

7. Synopsis of responses to the consultation on the draft Local Government (Standing Orders) Regulations.

Lord Morrow rejoined the meeting at 10.22am.

The Committee considered a synopsis of responses to the consultation on the draft Local Government (Standing Orders) Regulations.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to be briefed by officials at its next meeting.

8. SL1. The Smoke Control Areas (Exempted Fireplaces) (Amendment No 2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014.

The Committee considered an SL1 on the Smoke Control Areas (Exempted Fireplaces) (Amendment No 2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014.

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

9. SL1. The Planning (2011 Act) (Commencement No. 2) Order (NI) 2015.

Mr Boylan rejoined the meeting at 10.24am.

The Committee expressed their concerns about the type of training being provided to councillors on the transfer of functions and urged the Department to provide training which focusses on practical examples.

Mr Eastwood joined the meeting at 10.30am.

Agreed: the Committee agreed to write to the Department regarding the training provided to councillors on the transfer of functions.

Lord Morrow left the meeting at 10.32am.

The Committee considered an SL1 on the Planning (2011 Act) (Commencement No. 2) Order (NI) 2015.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite officials to brief it on this SL1.

10. SL1. The Planning (General Development Procedure) Order (NI) 2015.

The Committee considered an SL1 on the Planning (General Development Procedure) Order (NI) 2015.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite officials to brief it on this SL1.

11. SL1. The Planning (Development Management) Regulations (NI) 2015.

The Committee considered an SL1 on the Planning (Development Management) Regulations (NI) 2015.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite officials to brief it on this SL1.

12. SL1. The Planning General Regulations (NI) 2015.

The Committee considered an SL1 on the Planning General Regulations (NI) 2015.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite officials to brief it on this SL1.

13. Draft Budget 2015/16 – Departmental briefing

The Committee was briefed on the Department's assessment of the impact of the draft 2015-2016 Budget by the following officials:

Mr Leo O'Reilly	Permanent Secretary
Mr Anthony Carlton	Director of Finance
Ms Siobhan Lynch	Finance and Business Planning Division

Lord Morrow rejoined the Committee at 10.39am.

Mrs Overend joined the meeting at 10.47am.

Lord Morrow left the meeting at 11.46am.

Mrs Overend left the meeting at 11.46am.

Mrs Cameron left the meeting at 11.57am.

The main items discussed were:

- Proposed reduction of staff numbers and its impact on services; and
- The impact of budget changes on Programme for Government targets.

The Committee noted that the Department intended to publish its paper on its website.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that a draft response on the budget for 2015/2016 would be prepared for consideration at its next meeting.

14. Briefing by Northern Ireland Independent Retail Trade Association on Planning and Local Government.

Mr McElduff rejoined the meeting at 12.10pm.

Mrs Cameron rejoined the meeting at 12.10pm.

Mrs Overend rejoined the meeting at 12.11pm.

The Committee was briefed on planning issues for local retailers and town centres by the following representatives of the Northern Ireland Independent Retail Trade Association:

Mr Glyn Roberts	Chief Executive
Mr Des Stephens	Planning Adviser
Mr Andy Stephens	Planning Adviser

Further to their briefing, the representatives agreed to provide details of recent Article 31 applications.

Mr Eastwood left the meeting at 12.23pm.

Lord Morrow rejoined the meeting at 12.44pm.

Mr McElduff left the meeting at 1.00pm.

15. The Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill – informal clause by clause.

The Committee deferred the informal clause by clause consideration of the Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill until its next meeting

16. Correspondence

The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Education in relation to a Departmental consultation on the role of statutory partners in Community Planning.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward this to the Department, asking for a copy of the Synopsis of Responses to be forwarded to the Education Committee when this is available.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Enterprise, Trade & Investment regarding the Northern Ireland Environment Agency Protocol for measuring odour and ammonia.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Enterprise, Trade & Investment regarding the importation of house coal for domestic heating.

The Committee noted correspondence from Mr Fleming regarding a planning decision.

The Committee noted correspondence from Windwatch.

The Committee noted the latest edition of EU Matters provided by the Assembly's EU Affairs Manager.

The Committee noted Reform Inform for November 2014.

17. Forward Work Programme

The Committee noted the Forward Work Programme.

18. Any Other Business

Members noted that Easilink & the Community Transport Association would be making presentations in Room 342 on Tuesday 2 December 2014.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that a member of staff would attend the presentation and prepare a note of the issues raised.

19. Date, Time and Place of next meeting

The next meeting will be held Thursday 4th December 2014 in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 1.14 pm.

Anna Lo, MLA
Chairperson, Committee for the Environment
4 December 2014