



**Northern Ireland  
Assembly**

**COMMITTEE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT**

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

**THURSDAY, 20 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)  
Ms Pamela Dugdale (Research & Information Service – Item 1 only)
- Apologies: None

*The meeting began in closed session at 10.16 am.*

**1. Financial scrutiny training**

Training on financial scrutiny was delivered to members by a representative of Assembly Research and Information Service..

*Mrs Overend joined the meeting at 10.20 am.*

*Mr McCrea joined the meeting at 10.36 am.*

*Mr Eastwood joined the meeting at 10.52 am.*

*The meeting was suspended for a short break at 10.59 am.*

*The meeting resumed in public session at 11.03 am.*

*Mr McElduff joined the meeting at 11.03 am.*

*Mr Maginness joined the meeting at 11.03 am.*

## **2. Apologies**

No apologies were received.

## **3. Chairperson's Business**

The Chairperson referred members to correspondence from the Education for Sustainable Development Forum seeking an opportunity to brief the Committee on environmental education in Northern Ireland.

*Agreed: The Committee agreed to arrange a briefing with the Education for Sustainable Development Forum.*

The Chairperson highlighted correspondence from the Northern Ireland Renewables Industry Group inviting her to speak at its 2015 Conference.

*Agreed: The Committee was content that the Chairperson was unable to accept the invitation.*

The Chairperson advised members that the Minister had notified the Committee of his intention to make an oral statement on transport issues discussed at the recent North-South Ministerial Council on Monday 24 November 2014.

## **4. Minutes**

The minutes from the meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2014 were agreed.

## **5. Matters Arising**

The Committee noted correspondence from the Department regarding the draft Planning Policy Statement on Affordable Housing.

The Committee noted information from the Committee for Culture, Arts & Leisure on the work of the Northern Ireland Environment Agency/ National Museums Northern Ireland joint Working Group.

*Agreed: The Committee agreed to hold a joint visit to the Ulster Museum with the Committee for Culture, Arts & Leisure.*

The Committee considered documents regarding proposed changes to taxi plates. The Committee was briefed by Mr Iain Greenway, Director of Road Safety and Vehicle Regulation Division, on this matter.

*Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Department should provide clarification on the current specifications in regard to taxi signs & lights.*

*Mr McElduff left the meeting at 11.22 am.*

The Committee noted correspondence from Community Transport Association Northern Ireland.

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

**6. Consultation on proposals to amend UK Guidance Notes regarding the definition of Portable Batteries**

The Committee noted a consultation on proposals to amend UK Guidance Notes regarding the definition of Portable Batteries.

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

**7. Synopsis of responses to the Consultation on George Best Belfast City Airport Planning Agreement Modification.**

The Committee considered a synopsis of responses to the consultation on George Best Belfast City Airport Planning Agreement Modification.

*Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content to note the synopsis pending the outcome of the public inquiry.*

**8. SL1. The Planning (Statement of Community Involvement) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.**

The Committee noted correspondence from the Department setting out its timetable for proposed legislation on planning reform and transfer to new councils.

The Committee considered an SL1 on the Planning (Statement of Community Involvement) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.

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

**9. SL1. The Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.**

The Committee considered an SL1 on the Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.

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

**10. Statutory Rule: Pollution Prevention and Control (Industrial Emissions) (Amendment) Regulations – Departmental briefing**

*Mr Eastwood left the meeting at 11.3am.*

The Committee was briefed by Mr Bruce Harper, Environmental Policy Advisor, and Mr Dan Kennedy, Policy Advisor.

The Committee considered the draft affirmative Statutory Rule, The Pollution Prevention and Control (Industrial Emissions) (Amendment) Regulations.

*Question put and agreed:*

*“The Committee for the Environment has considered The Pollution Prevention and Control (Industrial Emissions) (Amendment) Regulations, and recommends that that it be affirmed by the Assembly.”*

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

The Committee was briefed by

Mr Iain Greenway	Director Road Safety and Vehicle Regulation Division
Mr John McMullan	Road Transport Legislation Branch
Mr John Brogan	Road User Behaviours Policy & Strategy Branch
Mr Donald Starritt	Road User Behaviours Policy & Strategy Branch

Officials outlined the policy basis for Part 2 of the Bill.

The briefing was recorded by Hansard.

The Committee carried out an informal consideration of the following clauses while officials remained in attendance:

**Clause 1: Defined expressions used in the Act.**

*Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Department’s explanation of the key issues surrounding this clause.*

**Clause 2: The prescribed limit.**

*Mr Weir joined the meeting at 11.46 am.*

*Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Department’s explanation of the key issues surrounding this clause.*

*Mr Eastwood rejoined the meeting at 11.51 am.*

*Mr McElduff rejoined the meeting at 11.51 am.*

**Clause 3: This will retain the right for a driver to ask for a blood or urine specimen to replace a breath test if that breath test is marginally over the present prescribed limit at the new lower prescribed limits.**

*Agreed: The Committee agreed that it like further information on the Departments legal advice & consequential amendments for this clause.*

*Mr McCrea left the meeting at 11.57 am.*

*Mrs Overend left the meeting at 12.01 pm.*

**Clause 4: Breath testing at authorised check-points.**

*Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Department’s explanation of the key issues surrounding this clause.*

**Clause 5: Check-point breath tests: further provision.**

*Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Department’s explanation of the key issues surrounding this clause.*

**Clause 6: Evidential breath test without preliminary breath test or check-point breath test.**

*Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Department's explanation of the key issues surrounding this clause.*

**Clause 7: Graduated penalty points for certain drink-driving offences as fixed penalty offences**

*Mr McElduff left the meeting at 12.08 pm.*

*Mrs Overend rejoined the meeting at 12.08 pm.*

*Agreed: The Committee agreed to request further information on drink-driving statistics.*

*Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Department's explanation of the key issues surrounding this clause.*

*Mr Boylan left the meeting at 12.23 pm.*

**Clause 8: Reduced penalty for course completion.**

*Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Department's explanation of the key issues surrounding this clause.*

**Clause 9: Approved course: completion and failure to complete.**

*Mr Boylan rejoined the meeting at 12.26 pm.*

*Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Department's explanation of the key issues surrounding this clause.*

**Clause 10: Payment of fixed penalty: failure to complete course.**

*Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Department's explanation of the key issues surrounding this clause.*

**Clause 11: Endorsement of further penalty points: failure to complete course.**

*Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Department's explanation of the key issues surrounding this clause.*

**Clause 12: Graduated minimum disqualification period is linked to the amount of alcohol consumed at the time of detection.**

*Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Department's explanation of the key issues surrounding this clause.*

**Clause 13: Increased disqualification for repeat offences**

*Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Department's explanation of the key issues surrounding this clause.*

**Clause 14: Reduced disqualification for course completion.**

*Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Department's explanation of the key issues surrounding this clause.*

**Clause 15: Administration costs in relation to approved courses.**

*Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Department's explanation of the key issues surrounding this clause.*

*Agreed: The Committee agreed to return to the informal consideration of the clauses of the Bill at its next meeting.*

*Mr Eastwood left the meeting at 12.29 pm.*

**12. Correspondence**

The Committee noted a Newry Walking Audit report from Imtac.

The Committee noted recent Departmental press releases.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister on the structure of the Local Government Partnership Panel.

**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 Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> November 2014 in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

*The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12.33 pm.*

**Anna Lo, MLA**

**Chairperson, Committee for the Environment**

**27 November 2014**