



**Northern Ireland  
Assembly**

**COMMITTEE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT**

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

**THURSDAY, 4 DECEMBER 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  
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)  
Mr Craig Mealey (Clerical Officer)

Apologies: Lord Morrow MLA

*The meeting began in public session at 10.05 am.*

**1. Apologies**

Apologies as above.

**2. Chairperson's Business**

The Chairperson referred members to a draft list of recipients for Committee Christmas cards.

*Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content to send e-Cards from the Committee to those on the list.*

The Chairperson referred members to correspondence from the Department indicating that the Minister would be making an oral statement on Monday 8 December.

The Chairperson advised members that arrangements for the meeting and visit to the South Eastern Regional College on Thursday 11 December 2014 had been tabled.

The Chairperson referred members to an invitation to attend an event organised for the visit of the Latvian Ambassador to Parliament Buildings.

**3. Minutes**

The minutes from the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2014 were agreed.

**4. Matters Arising**

The Committee noted a Departmental response to issues raised in relation to volunteer car schemes.

*Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward this response to the Community Transport Association.*

*Mr Milne joined the meeting at 10.11am.*

The Committee noted a record of a presentation by the Community Transport Network on Tuesday 2 December 2014.

The Committee noted correspondence from Volunteer Now and the Community Transport Association, seeking a meeting on the review of volunteer driving.

*Agreed: The Committee agreed that it would engage further with Volunteer Now and the Community Transport Association when the Department had finished its analysis of research data on volunteer driving.*

**5. Budget 2015-2016**

The Committee discussed a draft response setting out its views on the assessment of the draft budget for 2015-2016 by the Department of the Environment.

*Mr McCrea joined the meeting at 10.15am.*

*Mrs Cameron joined the meeting at 10.18am.*

*Agreed: The Committee agreed to continue its consideration of this item following its briefing from the Minister.*

## **6. Ministerial Briefing**

The Committee noted a Departmental update on the implementation of the Road Safety Strategy.

The Committee noted a Departmental response clarifying the current and proposed specifications for taxi roof signs.

The Committee noted a Departmental response to questions arising on the wind inquiry.

The Committee was briefed by:

Mr Mark Durkan	Minister of the Environment.
Mr Iain Greenway	Director, Road Safety and Vehicle Regulation.
Ms Linda MacHugh	Director, Local Government Policy Division.
Mr Angus Kerr	Director, Planning Policy.

The main issues discussed were road safety; preparation for the transfer of planning to councils; taxis legislation; the Strategic Planning Policy Statement; the Committee Inquiry into Wind Energy; and the Departmental budget 2015-2016.

The briefing was recorded by Hansard.

*Mr Maginness joined the meeting at 10.29am.*

*Mr Eastwood left the meeting at 11.30am.*

*Mr McElduff left the meeting at 11.35am.*

## **5. (resumed) Budget 2015-2016.**

The Committee returned to its consideration of its response to the draft budget.

*Agreed: The Committee agreed it was content with the response as amended.*

*Mr Maginness left the meeting at 11.43am.*

*Mr Eastwood rejoined the meeting at 11.45am.*

*Mrs Overend left the meeting at 11.45am.*

## **7. SL1. The Planning (Trees) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.**

The Committee considered an SL1 on the Planning (Trees) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.

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

*Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department for further information on the operation of the two-tier planning system.*

- 8. SL1. The Planning (Conservation Areas) (Demolition) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.**

The Committee considered an SL1 on the Planning (Conservation Areas) (Demolition) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.

*Agreed: The Committee was content for Department to make the Rule.*
- 9. SL1. The Planning (Listed Buildings) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.**

The Committee considered an SL1 on the Planning (Listed Buildings) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.

*Agreed: The Committee was content for Department to make the Rule.*
- 10. SL1. Amendments to the Motor Vehicles (Driving Licences) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1996.**

The Committee considered an SL1 on Amendments to the Motor Vehicles (Driving Licences) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1996.

*Agreed: The Committee was content for Department to make the Rule.*
- 11. SL1. Transposition of the Third Driving Licence Directive.**

The Committee considered an SL1 on the Transposition of the Third Driving Licence Directive.

*Agreed: The Committee was content for Department to make the Rule.*
- 12. SL1. The Nitrates Action Programme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014.**

The Committee considered an SL1 on the Nitrates Action Programme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014.

*Agreed: The Committee was content for Department to make the Rule.*
- 13. SL1. The Phosphorus (Use in Agriculture) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014.**

The Committee considered an SL1 on the Phosphorus (Use in Agriculture) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014.

*Agreed: The Committee was content for Department to make the Rule.*
- 14. The Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill – informal clause by clause.**

The Committee noted a Department briefing paper on Graduated Driver Licensing.

The Committee noted a Department letter regarding clauses 3 and 7 of the Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill

The Committee was briefed by

Mr Iain Greenway Director Road Safety and Vehicle Regulation Division

Ms Nicola McEvoy Road Safety and Vehicle Regulation Division

Mr John McMullan Road Transport Legislation Branch

Officials outlined the policy basis for Parts 3 and 4 of the Bill.

The briefing was recorded by Hansard.

*Mr Maginness rejoined the meeting at 11.52am.*

*Mrs Overend rejoined the meeting at 11.56am.*

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

*Mr Weir left the meeting at 12.37am.*

**Clause 16: Minimum age for licence: small vehicle.**

The Committee discussed the rationale for reducing the age at which people could obtain a provisional driving licence to 16½.

**Clause 17: Provisional licence to be held for minimum period in certain cases.**

The Committee discussed with officials the minimum period that a provisional licence should be held.

**Clause 18: Approved programmes of training: category B motor vehicles and motor bicycles.**

Officials advised members that the Department proposed to amend this clause.

*Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Department's explanation of the amendment.*

**Clause 19: Revocation of licence: forged etc. logbook**

There were no issues discussed in relation to this clause.

**Clause 20: Changes to restrictions on learner and new drivers.**

*Mr Weir rejoined the meeting at 12.47pm.*

The Committee discussed with officials the proposed passenger restrictions for new drivers.

**Clause 21: Approved courses for new drivers as alternative to revocation.**

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

**Clause 22: Extension of requirements as regards protective headgear.**

*Mr McElduff rejoined the meeting at 12.50pm.*

The Committee discussed the protective headgear with officials.

**Clause 22A introduces further amendment of the Order of 1995.**

Officials explained the background to this amendment.

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

*The Committee noted there would be a consequential amendment to clause 23.*

**Clause 23: Supplementary, incidental and consequential etc. provision**

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

**Clause 24: Transitional and saving provisions**

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

**Clause 25: Repeals**

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

**Clause 26: Commencement.**

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

The Committee noted that the Department aims to commence the legislation on alcohol limits in June 2014 and the legislation on Graduated Driver Licensing in 2017/18.

**Clause 27: Short title.**

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

The Committee noted that the Department would provide more details on the length of time taken between obtaining a provisional and a full driving licence.

*Mr Boylan left the meeting at 1.06pm.*

*Mr Milne left the meeting at 1.06pm.*

**15. Briefing on Standing Orders for Local Councils.**

The Committee was briefed on the synopsis of responses to the consultation on Standing Orders for Local Councils by

Ms Linda MacHugh Director Local Government Policy Division.

Ms Julie Broadway Local Government Policy Division.

Mr John Murphy Local Government Policy Division.

*Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content for the Department to prepare the relevant legislation.*

*Mr Eastwood left the meeting at 1.20pm.*

**16. Correspondence.**

The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development regarding the Northern Ireland Environment Agency.

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

The Committee noted correspondence from the Department regarding the Air Quality Summary Report for Northern Ireland 2013.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Public Accounts Committee regarding breaches of European Directives.

The Committee noted the Investment Strategy Northern Ireland report for November 2014.

**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 at 10.00am on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2014 in the Newtownards campus of the South-Eastern Regional College, and will be followed by a tour of its Environmental Skills Centre.

*The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 1.22 pm.*

**Anna Lo, MLA**  
**Chairperson, Committee for the Environment**  
**11 December 2014**