



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

THURSDAY, 16 APRIL 2015

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 Alban Maginness MLA
Mr Ian McCrea MLA
Mr Ian Milne MLA
Lord Morrow MLA
Mrs Sandra Overend MLA
Mr Peter Weir MLA

In Attendance: Miss Ciara McKay (Assembly Clerk)
Mr Mark McQuade (Assistant Clerk)
Mr Neil Sedgewick (Clerical Supervisor)
Miss Allison Ferguson (Clerical Officer)

Apologies:

The meeting began at 10.06am in closed session.

1. Funding for Environmental groups

The Committee noted its outstanding invitation to the Minister and officials to brief the Committee on the Department's engagement with the sector following the announcement of funding cuts.

Mr A Maginness joined the meeting at 10.07am.

Lord Morrow joined the meeting at 10.12am.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to encourage the Minister and officials to brief it on this matter at its meeting on Thursday 30th April 2015.

The meeting moved to public session at 10.19am.

2. Apologies

No apologies were received.

3. Chairperson's Business

The Committee noted an invitation from NILGA to members of the Committee to address its Annual Conference on Thursday 18th June 2015.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Clerk should seek further information from NILGA regarding timings; and to consider this matter again at its next meeting.

The Committee noted an invitation to an information session on European Union funding programmes on Friday 1st May 2015.

Mr Eastwood left the meeting at 10.22am.

The Committee noted correspondence from Northern Ireland Environment Link, regarding the impact of funding cuts on the environment sector.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward this correspondence to the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development.

The Committee noted an invitation for the Chairperson to speak at the launch of the Business and Biodiversity Charter in Northern Ireland.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the deputy Chairperson would represent the Committee at the event.

4. Minutes

The minutes from the meetings held on 19th March 2015 and 30th March 2015 were agreed.

5. Matters Arising

Mr Milne joined the meeting at 10.26am.

The Committee noted a response from the Department regarding Gold Mining Issues in County Tyrone.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the response to the Friends of Mickey Atty.

The Committee noted a response from the Department regarding taxi licencing and regulation.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the response to the member of the public who raised this issue with it.

The Committee noted the 13th Report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules Session 14/15, in particular the Examiner's comments in respect of the Planning (Trees) Regulation (NI) 2015.

The Committee noted a response from the Department regarding outlining the timescale for the Minister to respond to the Committee's Inquiry into Wind Energy.

The Committee noted correspondence from Windwatch requesting to brief the Committee on the Minister's response to the Committee's Inquiry into Wind Energy.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule a briefing from Windwatch onto the Forward Work Programme.

The Committee noted a Departmental update on Designation of Marine Conservation Zones.

The Committee noted Departmental Guidance to the Taxi Industry following Annulment Debate.

6. Consultations

The Committee noted a Departmental consultation on proposed changes to Regulations regarding Producer Responsibility.

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

The Committee noted a Departmental consultation on amending the Financial Provision for Waste Management Activities in Northern Ireland.

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

The Committee noted a consultation on a Private Members Bill on Naming of Public Facilities Entities after Ineligible People.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek advice in relation to the process for establishing the scrutiny committee for Private Members' Bills.

Lord Morrow left the meeting at 10.33am.

Mrs Overend joined the meeting at 10.33am.

7. SL1 - The Draft Local Government (Exclusion of Non-commercial Considerations) Order (NI) 2015.

The Committee considered an SL1 on the Draft Local Government (Exclusion of Non-commercial Considerations) Order (NI) 2015.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request a briefing from officials on the Draft Local Government (Exclusion of Non-commercial Considerations) Order (NI) 2015.

8. SL1 - The Ship Recycling Facilities Regulations (NI) 2015

The Committee considered an SL1 on the Ship Recycling Facilities Regulations (NI) 2015.

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

9. 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 the Department to make the Rule.

10. SL1 – The Planning General (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015

SR 2015/176 The Planning General (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015

The Committee considered an SL1 on the Planning General (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015, outlining amendments to the Planning General Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.

Mr McCrea joined the meeting at 10.36am.

Agreed: The Committee was content with the SL1 and agreed to formally consider the Statutory Rule.

The Committee agreed the following question:

‘The Committee for the Environment has considered SR 2015/176 The Planning General (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2015 and, subject to the report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules, has no objection to the Rule.’

11. SR 2015/160 The Local Government Reorganisation (Transferred Functions Grant) Regulations (NI) 2015

The Committee agreed the following question:

Mr Eastwood rejoined the meeting at 10.39am.

‘The Committee for the Environment has considered SR 2015/160 The Local Government Reorganisation (Transferred Functions Grant) Regulations (NI) 2015 and has no objection to the Rule.’

12. SR 2015/162 The Local Government Pension Scheme (Amendment No 2) Regulations (NI) 2015

The Committee agreed the following question:

Mr Maginness left the meeting at 10.39am.

‘The Committee for the Environment has considered SR 2015/162 The Local Government Pension Scheme (Amendment No 2) Regulations (NI) 2015 and has no objection to the Rule.’

13. SR 2015/174 The Certificates of Alternative Development Value Regulations (NI) 2015

The Committee agreed the following question:

‘The Committee for the Environment has considered SR 2015/174 The Certificates of Alternative Development Value Regulations (NI) 2015 and,

subject to the report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules, has no objection to the Rule.'

14. SR 2015/175 The Planning (Avian Influenza) (Special Development) Order (NI) 2015

The Committee agreed the following question:

'The Committee for the Environment has considered SR 2015/175 The Planning (Avian Influenza) (Special Development) Order (NI) 2015 and, subject to the report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules, has no objection to the Rule.'

15. SR 2015/177 The Planning (Conservation Areas) (Consultation) Regulations (NI) 2015

The Committee agreed the following question:

'The Committee for the Environment has considered SR 2015/177 The Planning (Conservation Areas) (Consultation) Regulations (NI) 2015 and, subject to the report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules, has no objection to the Rule.'

16. SR 2015/182 The Conservation (Natural Habitats etc) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2015.

The Committee agreed the following question:

'The Committee for the Environment has considered SR 2015/182 The Conservation (Natural Habitats etc) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2015 and, subject to the report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules, has no objection to the Rule.'

17. SR 2015 /183 The Local Government (Constituting a Joint Committee a Body Corporate) Order (NI) 2015.

The Committee agreed the following question:

'The Committee for the Environment has considered SR 2015/183 The Local Government (Constituting a Joint Committee a Body Corporate) Order (NI) 2015 and, subject to the report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules, has no objection to the Rule.'

18. SR 2015/187 The Planning (Modification and Discharge of Planning Agreements) Regulations (NI) 2015

The Committee agreed the following question:

'The Committee for the Environment has considered SR 2015/187 The Planning (Modification and Discharge of Planning Agreements) Regulations (NI) 2015 and, subject to the report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules, has no objection to the Rule.'

19. SR 2015/188 The Planning (Simplified Planning Zones) Regulations (NI) 2015

The Committee agreed the following question:

'The Committee for the Environment has considered SR 2015/188 The Planning (Simplified Planning Zones) Regulations (NI) 2015 and, subject to the report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules, has no objection to the Rule.'

20. SR 2015/189 The Planning (Inquiry Procedure) Rules (NI) 2015

The Committee agreed the following question:

'The Committee for the Environment has considered SR 2015/189 The Planning (Inquiry Procedure) Rules (NI) 2015 and, subject to the report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules, has no objection to the Rule.'

21. SR 2015/24 The Motor Vehicles (Wearing of Seat Belts) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015

The Committee noted that SR 2015/24 The Motor Vehicles (Wearing of Seat Belts) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 was affirmed by the Assembly.

22. SL1 - The Planning (Amount of Fixed Penalty) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 - Departmental Briefing

The Committee was briefed on the proposed statutory rule by:

Mr Angus Kerr	Director, Planning Policy Division
Mr Simon Kirk	Planning Manager, Strategic Planning Division
Mr John Conlon	Planning Policy Division
Mr Brian Gorman	Planning Service

Mr Maginness rejoined the meeting at 10.48am.

Mr Weir left the meeting at 10.59am.

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

23. SR 2015/14 The Food Waste Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 - Briefing from Arc 21 and North West Waste Management Group

The Committee was briefed on the implementation of the Regulations by:

Mr Ricky Burnett	Policy and Operations Director, ARC21
Mr Eamonn Molloy	Development Officer, North West Waste Management Group

Mr Weir rejoined the meeting at 11.05am.

Mr Eastwood left the meeting at 11.43am.

Mr Milne left the meeting at 11.49am.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department regarding the monitoring of food waste collections; the requirement for the Regulation; and to ascertain information on the types of waste collected and recycled by Council area.

24. Correspondence.

The Committee noted correspondence from Marine Conservation NI seeking to brief the Committee on damage caused by Scallop dredging.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to arrange a briefing with Marine Conservation NI.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Northern Ireland Assembly European Union Affairs Manager regarding infringement of European Union Legislation.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department regarding a breach under the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive referring to inadequate treatment of waste water from Ballycastle.

The Committee noted correspondence from a Member of the Public regarding the removal of grant funding from Outdoor Recreation NI.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the letter to the Department.

The Committee noted correspondence from a Member of the Public regarding funding cuts to environment groups.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the letter to the Department.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward all correspondence it received, in advance of the Minister's briefing to the Committee on 30th March 2015 on cuts in funding, to the Department.

The Committee noted a report from Carnegie UK Trust - Improving Wellbeing in NI.

The Committee noted EU Matters, Issue 3-2015.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Public Accounts Committee regarding Council Governance and the action taken by that Committee.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister regarding its Inquiry into Building a United Community.

The Committee noted the Northern Ireland Audit Office Good Practice Guide regarding conflicts of interest.

The Committee noted a Department publication, Reform Inform.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Department regarding the Planning (Notification of Applications) Direction 2015.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Department regarding the Planning (Demolition - Description of Buildings) Directions 2015.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Enterprise, Trade & Investment regarding Fracking on the North Coast.

The Committee noted correspondence from a taxi driver regarding Taxi Legislation.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Department regarding advance notice of consultation letters to Section 75 Groups.

The Committee noted the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland Report for March 2015.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Department regarding the quarterly update on Article 31 Planning Applications.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Department regarding the Pollution Prevention and Control (District Council) Charging Scheme (NI) 2015.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance and Personnel regarding a report on sick absence in the Northern Ireland Public Sector.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Wildlife Trust to the Minister regarding withdrawal of funding.

The Committee noted correspondence copied to the Committee from Six Mile Water Trust.

25. Forward Work Programme

The Committee noted the Forward Work Programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it will not hold a meeting on 7th May 2015.

26. Any Other Business

No other business was discussed.

27. Date, Time and Place of next meeting

The Committee agreed that its next meeting will be held at 10.00am on Thursday 23rd April 2015 in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 11.59am.

Anna Lo, MLA
Chairperson, Committee for the Environment
23 April 2015