



**Northern Ireland  
Assembly**

**COMMITTEE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT**

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

**THURSDAY, 30 APRIL 2015**

**SENATE CHAMBER, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Ms Anna Lo MLA (Chairperson)  
Mrs Pam Cameron MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr Cathal Boylan 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: Mr Colum Eastwood MLA  
Mr Barry McElduff MLA

*The meeting began at 10.02am in public session.*

**1. Apologies**

The apologies are noted above.

**2. Minutes**

The minutes from the meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2015 were agreed.

**3. SL1 - The Taxis (Taximeters and Fares) Regulations (NI) 2015.**

*Mr McCrea joined the meeting at 10.05am.*

The Committee noted an email from a taxi driver outlining his concerns regarding the impact of the forthcoming taxi regulations, in advance of the briefing from officials.

The Committee noted an email from the Belfast Taxi Association, outlining concerns regarding the taxi regulations, in advance of the briefing from officials

The Committee was briefed on the proposed statutory rule by:

Mr Iain Greenway                      Director of Road Safety & Vehicle Regulation

Mr Michael O'Neill                      Taxis Act Implementation team

Mr Alex Boyle                      Head of Road Vehicle Policy

*Mrs Overend joined the meeting at 10.25am.*

*Mr Alban Maginness left the meeting at 10.35am.*

*Agreed: Officials agreed to explore with manufacturers of taximeters whether they can stipulate in their instructions that meters should only be fitted by authorised personnel.*

*Mr Alban Maginness rejoined the meeting at 10.49am.*

*Agreed: The Committee was content for the Department to make the Rule, subject to officials' assurances to consider issues around the fitting of taximeters by authorised personnel; and educating people on the health and safety aspects of fitting taximeters.*

#### **4. SL1 - The Taxi Accessibility Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015**

The Committee noted correspondence from IMTAC providing supplementary evidence to the Committee on its views on the Taxi Accessibility Regulations.

The Committee was briefed on the proposed statutory rule by:

Mr Iain Greenway                      Director of Road Safety & Vehicle Regulation

Mr Michael O'Neill                      Taxis Act Implementation team

Mr Alex Boyle                      Head of Road Vehicle Policy

*Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department for Regional Development regarding issues around wheelchair access of rear-loading vehicles at taxi ranks.*

*Mr McCrea left the meeting at 11.13am.*

*Agreed: The Committee was content for the Department to make the Rule, subject to an amendment to the Rule to extend the grandfather rights period from 5 to 6 years.*

*Mr Boylan left the meeting at 11.20am.*

*Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek a briefing from the enforcement officers of the taxi regulations, when appropriate.*

*Mr Weir left the meeting at 11.25am.*

**5. SR 2015/229 The Ship Recycling Facilities Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015**

The Committee agreed the following question:

*'The Committee for the Environment has considered SR 2015/229 The Ship Recycling Facilities Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 and, subject to the report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules, has no objection to the Rule.'*

**6. SL1 - The Hazardous Waste (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015**

The Committee considered the Hazardous Waste (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.

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

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

*Mr Boylan rejoined the meeting at 11.28am.*

*Mr Maginness left the meeting at 11.28am.*

The Committee was briefed on the proposed statutory rule by:

Ms Mylene Ferguson      Local Government Policy Division

Ms Julie Broadway      Local Government Policy Division

Mr Tommy McCormick      Local Government Policy Division

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

**8. Chairperson's Business**

*Agreed: The Committee agreed to hold an informal meeting at the Balmoral Show on Thursday 14th May, to discuss the Land Matters Taskforce report 'Towards a Land Strategy for Northern Ireland'.*

*Agreed: It was agreed that the Committee office would liaise with Members regarding a suitable date for meeting with the environment NGO sector on the allocation of funds from the Carrier Bag Levy.*

*Mrs Cameron left the meeting at 11.43am.*

**9. Matters Arising**

The Committee noted the Clerk's report on its meeting with stakeholders regarding the developments of a circular economy.

*Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite representatives of the WRAP project to formally brief the Committee on its key recommendations following the conclusion of the project.*

The Committee noted an invitation from ReNew to a brokerage event in Brussels on developing a circular economy.

The Committee noted the 14<sup>th</sup> Report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules.

The Committee noted correspondence from Kells VOCAL, requesting a meeting on solar power development. Members noted that the Committee had written to the Department about this matter on 12 March 2015 and had yet to receive a reply.

*Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the letter to the Department, seeking a response to issues raised.*

The Committee noted a response from the Department to the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister in relation to its Inquiry into Building a United Community.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister advising it of additional amendments to the Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill.

*Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite officials to brief it on the proposed additional amendments to the Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill.*

The Committee noted a response from the Department regarding the European Commission's referral to the Court of Justice regarding non-compliance of a European Commission Directive at Ballycastle Waste Water Treatment Works.

*Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to ascertain if the Department would be liable for any costs; and to request regular updates on this matter.*

## **10. Consultations**

The Committee considered a consultation on the Planning (Hazardous Substances) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.

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

The Committee considered correspondence from the Department advising of an upcoming consultation on recommendations in a report by the Entertainment Licensing Review Group.

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

## **11. Correspondence.**

The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister regarding the introduction of the Public Services Ombudsperson Bill.

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

The Committee noted the April Edition of the EU Matters newsletter.

The Committee noted correspondence from IMTAC regarding its findings of a DRD Report on the Attitudes of Disabled and Older People to Public Transport.

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

The Committee noted correspondence from the Northern Ireland Environment Agency regarding the Pollution Prevention Control (Industrial Emissions) Charging Scheme (NI) 2015 and the Radioactive Substances (Fees and Charges) Scheme (NI) 2015.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Northern Ireland Environment Agency regarding the Waste Management Charging (NI) Scheme 2015.

The Committee noted correspondence from West Tyrone Against Wind Turbines regarding wind turbine noise.

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

The Committee noted correspondence from the Speaker, notifying the Committee of the petition presented to the Assembly on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2015 on the proposed development alongside the Six Mile Water River.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Six Mile Water Trust on the proposed development alongside the Six Mile Water River.

*Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department, expressing its interest in this matter given the number of pollution incidents; and requested a breakdown of the number of pollution incidents in the last 5 years.*

## **12. Forward Work Programme**

The Committee considered its Forward Work Programme, and correspondence from the Department on its Forward Work Programme for April to July 2015.

*Agreed: The Committee agreed the oral briefings it wished to receive before July 2015.*

## **13. Any Other Business**

No other business was discussed.

## **14. Date, Time and Place of next meeting**

The Committee agreed that its next meeting will be held at 10.00am on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2015 in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

*The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12.02am.*

**Anna Lo, MLA**  
**Chairperson, Committee for the Environment**  
**21 May 2015**