



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

THURSDAY, 7 JANUARY 2016

SENATE CHAMBER, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present: Mrs Pam Cameron MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Cathal Boylan MLA
Mr Alban Maginness MLA
Mr Ian Milne MLA
Mrs Sandra Overend MLA

In Attendance: Miss Ciara McKay (Assembly Clerk)
Mr Mark McQuade (Assistant Clerk)
Mr Neil Sedgewick (Clerical Supervisor)
Mrs Sharon Young (Clerical Officer)

Apologies: Ms Anna Lo MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Paul Girvan MLA
Ms Claire Hanna MLA
Mr William Irwin MLA
Mr Barry McElduff MLA
Mr George Robinson MLA

The meeting opened in closed session at 10.27 am with the Deputy Chairperson in the Chair.

1. Scrap Metal Dealers Bill

The Committee noted correspondence from Ballyvesey Recycling Solutions.

The Committee noted responses from NILGA; the Department for Regional Development; Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council; and Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council to the Scrap Metal Dealer's Bill.

The Committee noted a response from the Department on the number of high level sentences as a result of environmental crime.

The Committee discussed the Scrap Metal Dealers Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Chair and Deputy Chair should rely on the Committee's concerns regarding the remaining timescale of the Bill to Mr Roy Beggs.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to proceed with the briefing on Tuesday 12th January on the Scrap Metal Dealers Bill, should the sponsor of the Bill wish to proceed.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to publish responses to the Committee's call for evidence on the Bill on the Assembly website and to copy these to the Department for information.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite other scrap metal dealers to give evidence on the Bill; and to provide names to the Committee Clerk.

The Committee noted that the Minister does not intend to move Amendment 6 of the Environmental Better Regulation Bill.

The meeting moved to public session at 10.48am.

2. Apologies.

The apologies are noted above.

3. Chairpersons Business

The Committee noted correspondence from the Woodland Trust regarding an initiative calling for the creation of a Charter for Trees, Woods and People.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content for the Chairperson to take part in a photo opportunity as part of the initiative to create a Charter.

4. Minutes

The minutes from the meetings held on 10th December 2015 and 15th December 2015 were agreed.

5. Matters arising

The Committee noted a response from the Department regarding Wind Turbines.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the response to Dr Lennon who raised this matter with it.

The Committee noted a response from the Department regarding waste recycling.

The Committee noted responses from some Councils and the Housing Executive to the Committee's request for statistics and details on the level of occurrence of Japanese Knotweed.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to await scheduling an oral briefing until all responses had been received and the Committee had received a response to its letter to the Minister regarding raising this issue at the Executive.

The Committee noted a summary of issues discussed in a meeting with Mid Ulster Council councillors and officials.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department regarding the issues raised in the meeting.

6. Consultations.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Department on Marine Conservation Zones in the Northern Ireland inshore region.

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

The Committee noted correspondence from the Department regarding a consultation on changes to the plastic packaging recycling business targets for 2016/17, as part of a UK wide consultation.

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

7. Statutory rules on taxi legislation – Departmental Briefing.

Officials joined the meeting at 10.58am.

The Committee was briefed by:

Ms Liz Loughran	Director of Road safety and vehicle registration division, DOE
Ms Michael O'Neill	Taxi Act implementation team, DOE
Mr Alex Boyle	Road safety and vehicle registration division, DOE

Officials left the meeting at 12.15pm.

Agreed: Officials agreed to provide the following information to the Committee: the formula used to calculate the maximum fare; the number of respondents to the consultation on the taxi reform programme; further information on the consultant's report and analysis of the issues of dead miles; and to consider the wording of the regulations to ascertain whether there is scope to address concerns on the issue of dead miles.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to move to closed session at 12.15pm.

The Committee discussed the evidence taken from officials.

The Committee moved to public session at 12.34pm.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek clarification from officials on the consequential impact on the taxi reform programme if particular Statutory Rules were annulled.

- 8. SR 2015 /389 The Taxis (2008 Act) (Commencement No 5) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015**

The Committee noted the Taxis (2008 Act) (Commencement No 5) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015.
- 9. SR 2015/393 The Taxi Licensing Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015**

Agreed: The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the statutory rule.
- 10. SR 2015/394 The Taxis (Taximeters, Devices and Maximum Fares) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015**

Agreed: The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the statutory rule.
- 11. SR 2015/395 The Taxi Operators Licensing (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015**

Agreed: The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the statutory rule.
- 12. SR 2015/396 The Taxi Accessibility Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015**

Agreed: The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the statutory rule.
- 13. SR 2015/397 The Road Vehicles Lighting (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015**

Agreed: The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the statutory rule.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider the following two SLI policy proposals relating to fixed penalties for taxi offences.
- 14. SL1 – Amendment of the Road Traffic (Fixed Penalty) (Offences) Order (Northern Ireland) 1997**

Agreed: The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the SLI.
- 15. SL1 – Amendment of the Road Traffic (Fixed Penalty) Order (Northern Ireland) 2007**

Agreed: The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the SLI.
- 16. SR 2015/406 The Smoke Control Areas (Exempted Fireplaces) (Amendment No.2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015**

Question put and agreed:

“The Committee for the Environment has considered SR 2015/406 The Smoke Control Areas (Exempted Fireplaces) (Amendment No.2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 and has no objection to the Rule.”

17. SL1 - The Draft Local Government (Community Planning Partners) Order (NI) 2015

The Committee noted a response from the Department to the Committee’s request that the Controlled Schools Support Council (CSSC) be added as a statutory community planning partner.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask the Department for an update on the development of an engagement protocol for Executive Departments.

18. Pollution in Northern Ireland Rivers

Agreed: The Committee agreed to hold a stakeholder event on river pollution on Monday 22nd February 2016.

Agreed: The Committee agreed a list of stakeholders to be invited to the event.

19. Correspondence

The Committee noted a letter from Department outlining plans to launch two consultations in December relating to marine Special Protection Areas.

The Committee noted a letter from Department to stakeholders providing an update on the Freshwater Summit Action Plan.

The Committee noted an update from the Department regarding the George Best Belfast City Airport Planning Agreement

The Committee noted a written statement made by the Minister of Finance and Personnel Committee on the Budget 2016/17.

The Committee noted correspondence from Windwatch NI regarding the impact of wind turbines. The Committee noted that it intended to take evidence from officials on the review of the renewable energy guidance this session.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward a copy of the Department’s correspondence on the outcome of the HSENI investigation to Windwatch NI.

The Committee noted correspondence regarding DOE funding of the EPA research.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to await the Department’s response to the Committee’s correspondence on this matter before considering further.

The Committee noted correspondence regarding the Forest of Britain proposal for reforestation.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Policy Forum for Northern Ireland regarding its “Planning reform in Northern Ireland: progress, priorities and next steps” event.

The Committee noted the House of Lords Select Committee on the European Union Report on EU energy governance.

The Committee noted the Investment Strategy report for December 2015.
The Committee noted the Irish Environment Newsletter for January 2016.

20. Forward Work Programme

The Committee noted the Departments Forward Work Programme.
Agreed: The Committee agreed its Forward Work Programme.

21. Any Other Business

No other business was discussed.

22. Date, Time and Place of next meeting.

The Committee noted that its next meeting will be held at 1.15pm on Tuesday 12th January 2016 in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12.48pm.

Anna Lo, MLA
Chairperson, Committee for the Environment
14 January 2016