



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

THURSDAY, 10 DECEMBER 2015

SENATE CHAMBER, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present: Ms Anna Lo MLA (Chairperson)
Mrs Pam Cameron MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Cathal Boylan MLA
Mr Paul Girvan MLA
Mr Alban Maginness MLA
Mr Barry McElduff MLA
Mr Ian Milne MLA
Mrs Sandra Overend MLA
Mr George Robinson 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 Claire Hanna MLA
Mr William Irwin MLA

The meeting opened in public session at 10.10am.

1. Apologies.

The apologies are noted above.

2. Chairpersons Business

The Committee noted a response from the Minister advising he will provide a summary of the discussions at the historic environment conference to the Committee.

Mr Robinson joined the meeting at 10.12am.

The Committee considered an invitation from ReGen inviting the Committee to visit its recycling and waste management site in Newry.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to accept the invitation.

Mr Milne joined the meeting at 10.13am.

The Committee noted correspondence from Northern Ireland Environment Link asking it to sponsor events in Parliament Buildings for Northern Ireland Environment Week 2016.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to sponsor events as part of Parliament Buildings for Northern Ireland Environment Week 2016.

3. Minutes

The minutes from the meeting held on 3rd December 2015 were agreed.

4. Matters arising

The Committee noted a response from the Department on the Committee's report on its visit to Bryson Recycling, providing a copy of WRAP's assessment of the pilot project. The Department advised that recycling study will be presented at the Waste Programme Board meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request an update from the Department on following the Waste Programme Board meeting; and also to request a comparison of costs between kerbside collection and blue bin collections.

The Committee noted a response from the Department outlining the outcome of discussions with the Minister and the Minister of Finance and Personnel on the proposed cap on public sector exit payments.

The Committee noted a response from the Department regarding the reduction in planning decisions since the transfer of powers to local councils.

The Committee noted a paper from the Department on the interim report on the NSMC commissioned research study on air pollution.

The Committee noted an update from the Department on outstanding work items on the Department's Forward Work Programme.

The Committee considered an advance copy of a discussion paper from the Department on options to develop the better management and control of bonfires.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request an oral briefing from the Department on responses to the discussion paper.

The Committee considered a number of Statutory Rules on the taxi reform programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite officials to brief it informally on taxi regulations following its meeting on Tuesday 15th December 2015.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to take formal oral evidence from Department officials on the statutory rules at its meeting on 7th January 2016.

The Committee noted correspondence from Mr Wright regarding public health issues relating to carcinogens.

The Committee noted a response from the Department regarding mobile network operators and concerns regarding the planning process

Mr Girvan joined the meeting at 10.36am.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the response to the Committee for Enterprise, Trade & Investment who raised the issue.

The Committee noted correspondence from Knotweed NI regarding recent media coverage.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Minister asking him to raise issues arising from the spread of Japanese knotweed to the Executive given that it is a crosscutting issue.

5. Annual update on Strategic Waste Infrastructure Programme – Departmental briefing.

Officials joined the meeting at 10.43am.

The Committee was briefed by:

Mr Leo O'Reilly Permanent Secretary, Department of the Environment

Dr Jennifer Stewart Environmental Policy Division, Department of the Environment

Mr McElduff left the meeting at 10.47am.

Mrs Overend left the meeting at 11.17am.

Agreed: Officials agreed to clarify details of the waste that the Bombardier plant will accept.

Mrs Cameron made a declaration that some family members work for Bombardier.

Mr Maginness left the meeting at 11.32am.

Mr Milne left the meeting at 11.32am.

Agreed: Officials agreed to provide the Committee with a breakdown of the £10m spend on the waste management infrastructure procurement programme (including across councils).

Mrs Overend returned to the meeting at 11.36am.

Officials left the meeting at 11.40am.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite NILGA and SOLACE to brief it on Councils approach to waste management.

6. Scrap Metal Dealers Bill – Departmental Briefing.

Officials joined the meeting at 11.42am.

The Committee was briefed by:

Mr Brendan Forde	Environmental Policy Division, Department of the Environment
Ms Mairead Adams	Environmental Policy Division, Department of the Environment
Ms Helen Lewis	Environmental Policy Division, Department of the Environment

Mr Milne rejoined the meeting at 12.04pm.

Agreed: Officials agreed to provide the Committee with further information on the level of fines imposed for environmental offences.

Officials left the meeting at 12.41pm.

7. Scrap Metal Dealers Bill – Briefing form the Northern Ireland Utilities Working Group on Metal Theft

Witnesses joined the meeting at 12.42pm.

The Committee was briefed by:

Mr George Ong	Chief Risk Officer, NI Water, NI Utilities Working Group
Mr Paul Irving	Land & Property Security Officer, NIE Networks, NI Utilities Working Group
Mr Eugene O'Brien	Infrastructure Executive, Translink, NI Utilities Working Group
Mr Eddie Lynn	Asst. Lighting Engineer, Transport NI, NI Utilities Working Group

Mr Robinson left the meeting at 12.42pm.

Mr Milne left the meeting at 12.47pm.

Mr Maginness rejoined the meeting at 1.12pm.

Witnesses left the meeting at 1.13pm.

Mr Girvan left the meeting at 1.13pm.

8. SL1 – Amendment of the Road Traffic (Fixed Penalty) (Offences) Order (Northern Ireland) 1997

Agreed: The Committee agreed to defer consideration of an SL1 for an amendment to the Road Traffic (Fixed Penalty) (Offences) Order (Northern Ireland) 1997 until its meeting on 15 December 2015.

9. SL1 – Amendment of the Road Traffic (Fixed Penalty) Order (Northern Ireland) 2007

Agreed: The Committee agreed to defer consideration of an SL1 for an amendment to the Road Traffic (Fixed Penalty) Order (Northern Ireland) 2007 until its meeting on 15 December 2015.

10. SR 2015/386 The Waste Management Licensing (Amendment No.2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015

Question put and agreed:

“The Committee for the Environment has considered SR 2015/386 The Waste Management Licensing (Amendment No. 2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 and, subject to the report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules, has no objection to the Rule.”

11. SR 2015/398 The Planning (Fees) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015

Agreed: The Committee agreed to defer consideration of SR 2015/398 The Planning (Fees) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 until its meeting on 15 December 2015

12. Correspondence

The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister regarding the Departments Bill and Transfer of Functions Order.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek the views of key stakeholders on the transfer of functions.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request an oral briefing from officials on transfer of functions.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider all other items of correspondence until its meeting on 15th December.

13. Forward Work Programme

The Committee noted its Forward Work Programme.

14. Any Other Business

No other business was discussed.

15. Date, Time and Place of next meeting.

The Committee noted that its next meeting will be held at 2.00pm on Tuesday 15th December 2015 in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 1.18pm.

**Pam Cameron, MLA
Deputy Chairperson, Committee for the Environment
7 January 2016**