



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

THURSDAY, 1 OCTOBER 2015

SENATE CHAMBER, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present: Ms Anna Lo MLA (Chairperson)
Mrs Pam Cameron MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Colum Eastwood MLA
Mr Alban Maginness MLA
Mr Ian McCrea MLA
Mr Barry McElduff MLA
Mr Gary Middleton MLA
Mrs Sandra Overend MLA
Lord Morrow MLA

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

Apologies: Mr Cathal Boylan MLA
Mr Ian Milne MLA

The meeting opened in public session at 10.03am.

1. Apologies.

The apologies are noted above.

Mr Maginness left the meeting at 10.05am

2. Chairpersons Business.

The Chairperson noted that Mr McCrea would be leaving the Committee and thanked him for his contribution to the work of the Committee.

The Committee noted an article from the Irish News on the species champion initiative.

3. Minutes.

The minutes from the meeting held on 24th September 2015 were agreed.

4. Matters arising.

The Committee noted a letter from the Minister regarding his decision to refuse planning permission for the proposed Arc 21 incinerator and waste sorting plant in the Hightown Quarry in Newtownabbey.

The Committee noted a response from the Department regarding countryside access.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the Department's response on countryside access to the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department for further information on public liability and insurance policies in relation to the Ulster Way.

The Committee noted a response from the Department providing a breakdown of estimated savings for the Northern Ireland Civil Service voluntary exit scheme.

Mr McElduff joined the meeting at 10.20am.

Mrs Overend joined the meeting at 10.20am.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to ascertain how the savings from VES would be used; and for clarification around the criteria of subsequent tranches within the scheme.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Department providing an update on the Road Traffic Amendment Bill.

5. Consultations

The Committee noted a consultation on the identification and designation of Quiet Areas.

Mr Eastwood joined the meeting at 10.26am.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request a synopsis of responses to the consultation.

6. SL1 - The Water Framework Directive (Classification, Priority Substances and Shellfish Waters) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.

The Committee considered the Water Framework Directive (Classification, Priority Substances and Shellfish Waters) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content for the Department to proceed with the proposed statutory rule.

7. Draft Statutory Rule - the Draft Local Government (Standing Orders) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015

The Committee considered a draft statutory rule: the Draft Local Government (Standing Orders) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite officials to brief it on the rule at next week's meeting.

8. Raise paper - Zero Waste Conference - Written briefing

The Committee noted a report on the Zero Waste Conference prepared by Assembly Research and Information Service.

9. ReNEW report into the Circular Economy in NI

The Committee was briefed by:

Mr Martin Doherty, Special Advisor, ReNew; and

Mr Ian Garner, Manager, Wrap NI.

Mr McCrea left the meeting at 10.38am.

Mr Eastwood left the meeting at 11.11am.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department asking what action it intends to take based on the recommendations in the recently published report 'Job Creation on the Circular Economy – Increasing Resource Efficiency in NI'.

10. Correspondence.

The Committee noted a letter from the Minister regarding his written statement to the Assembly on Monday 28 September 2015 on the publication of the Single Planning Policy Statement.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance and Personnel advising that there would not be an October 2015 monitoring round.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance and Personnel regarding Northern Ireland Environment Week.

The Committee noted the Investment Strategy NI report for September 2015.

The Committee noted the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Superannuation Committee Annual Report and Accounts for 2014/15.

11. Forward Work Programme.

The Committee noted its Forward Work Programme.

12. Any Other Business.

The Committee discussed recent reports of a pollution incident on the three mile river.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department for information on the cause of the incident.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Clerk would prepare an options paper outlining how to consider issues around river pollution.

Mr Middleton left the meeting at 11.26am.

The Committee discussed changes to subsidies for Wind Energy developments.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department about public access to planning information on wind energy developments.

The Committee noted that the Minister's statement on the Single Planning Policy Statement included a ban on hydraulic fracturing to extract shale gas.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to ask what impact this ban might have on jobs and energy costs.

13. Date, Time and Place of next meeting.

The Committee agreed that its next meeting will be held at 10.00am on Thursday 8th October 2015 in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 11.29pm.

Anna Lo, MLA

Chairperson, Committee for the Environment

8 October 2015