



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

Windsor Framework Democratic Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of Proceedings

18 September 2025

**Meeting Location:** Room 30

**Present:**

Ciara Ferguson MLA (Chairperson)

David Brooks MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Steve Aiken MLA

Declan Kearney MLA

Peter Martin MLA

**Present by Video:**

Emma Sheerin MLA

**Apologies:**

Kate Nicholl MLA

**In Attendance:**

Jessica Jacques (Senior Assistant Clerk)

Christopher Dickison (Senior Assistant Clerk)

Victoria Bourquin (Assistant Clerk)

Suzanne Walsh (Clerical Supervisor)

Damien Brown (Clerical Officer)

**In Attendance by Video:**

Oliver Bellew (Assistant Clerk)

Carla Campbell (Clerical Supervisor)

Shelley Garner (Clerical Officer)

The meeting commenced at 10.04am in closed session.

**1. Apologies**

As above.

**2. Declaration of Members' Interest**

None.

**3. COM/2025/386 Proposal for a Regulation on the European Chemicals Agency and amending Regulations (EC) No 1907/2006, (EU) No 528/2012, (EU) No 649/2012 and (EU) 2019/1021 - Legal Advice**

Jonathan McMillen, Legal Adviser, Assembly Legal Services, joined the meeting at 10.06am.

The Committee considered a notification from the Cabinet Office in relation to the following proposed replacement EU act:

COM/2025/386 Proposal for a Regulation on the European Chemicals Agency and amending Regulations (EC) No 1907/2006, (EU) No 528/2012, (EU) No 649/2012 and (EU) 2019/1021.

The Legal Adviser provided advice on the content and scope of the proposed EU act.

A question and answer session followed.

The Legal Adviser left the meeting at 10.20am.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to continue its consideration of the proposed replacement EU act in public session.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the UK Government to request confirmation that the proposed EU act as a whole is considered a 'replacement EU act' under Schedule 6B to the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

**4. COM/2025/526 Proposal for a Regulation amending Regulation (EU) 2024/2865 as regards dates of application and transitional provisions – Legal Advice**

Caroline Byers, Legal Adviser, Assembly Legal Services, joined the meeting at 10.22am.

The Committee considered a notification from the Cabinet Office in relation to the following proposed replacement EU act:

COM/2025/526 Proposal for a Regulation amending Regulation (EU) 2024/2865 as regards dates of application and transitional provisions.

The Legal Adviser provided advice on whether it appears likely that the proposed EU act differs significantly (in whole or in part) from the content or scope of the EU act it is amending/replacing.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to continue its consideration of the proposed replacement EU act in public session.

The Legal Adviser remained in the meeting for agenda item 5.

**5. COM/2025/531 Proposal for a Regulation amending Regulations (EC) No 1272/2008, (EC) No 1223/2009 and (EU) 2019/1009 as regards simplification of certain requirements and procedures for chemical products - Legal Advice**

The Committee considered a notification from the Cabinet Office in relation to the following proposed replacement EU act:

COM/2025/531 Proposal for a Regulation amending Regulations (EC) No 1272/2008, (EC) No 1223/2009 and (EU) 2019/1009 as regards simplification of certain requirements and procedures for chemical products.

The Legal Adviser provided advice on whether it appears likely that the proposed EU act differs significantly (in whole or in part) from the content or scope of the EU act it is amending/replacing.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to continue its consideration of the proposed replacement EU act in public session.

The Legal Adviser left the meeting at 10.48am.

The Committee moved into public session at 10.48am.

**6. Draft Minutes**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2025.

**7. Matters Arising**

None.

**8. COM/2025/386 Proposal for a Regulation on the European Chemicals Agency and amending Regulations (EC) No 1907/2006, (EU) No 528/2012, (EU) No 649/2012 and (EU) 2019/1021 - Departmental Oral Evidence**

The Committee continued its consideration of the following proposed EU act:

COM/2025/386 Proposal for a Regulation on the European Chemicals Agency and amending Regulations (EC) No 1907/2006, (EU) No 528/2012, (EU) No 649/2012 and (EU) 2019/1021.

The following officials joined the meeting at 10.51am:

Mark McGregor	Head of Trade and Windsor Framework Branch, Department for the Economy
Sarah-Jane Murphy	Chemicals and Industrial Pollution Policy Branch, Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

The officials gave oral evidence on the proposed EU act.

The evidence session was reported by Hansard.

Sarah-Jane Murphy left the meeting at 11.00am. Mark McGregor remained in the meeting for agenda item 9.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to monitor the progress of the proposed replacement act, pursuant to paragraph 7(1) of Schedule 6B to the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to request that the Departments provide revised assessments of impact if any changes are proposed by the Council of the European Union or the European Parliament, which would have a significant impact specific to everyday life of communities in Northern Ireland in a way that is liable to persist.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to request that RaISe monitors the progress of the proposed EU act, including negotiations in the European Parliament and Council of the European Union, and submits quarterly updates, or more often as appropriate, to the Committee.

9. **COM/2025/526 Proposal for a Regulation amending Regulation (EU) 2024/2865 as regards dates of application and transitional provisions - Departmental Oral Evidence**
10. **COM/2025/531 Proposal for a Regulation amending Regulations (EC) No 1272/2008, (EC) No 1223/2009 and (EU) 2019/1009 as regards simplification of certain requirements and procedures for chemical products - Departmental Oral Evidence**

The Committee agreed to consider agenda items 9 and 10 together.

The Committee continued its consideration of the following proposed EU acts:

COM/2025/526 Proposal for a Regulation amending Regulation (EU) 2024/2865 as regards dates of application and transitional provisions; and

COM/2025/531 Proposal for a Regulation amending Regulations (EC) No 1272/2008, (EC) No 1223/2009 and (EU) 2019/1009 as regards simplification of certain requirements and procedures for chemical products.

The following officials joined the meeting at 11.01am:

Dr Jennifer Stewart	Head of Firearms and Explosives Branch, Department of Justice
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Alan Lunn	Fertiliser Policy, Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
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The officials gave oral evidence on the proposed EU acts.

A question and answer session followed.

Declan Kearney left the meeting at 11.24am.

The Committee noted that the UK Government Explanatory Memorandum includes comments on divergence between EU and GB chemical labelling rules, and states that incoming requirements would nullify aspects of this.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to request more information on these requirements from the UK Government, and the Department for the Economy.

The evidence session was reported by Hansard.

The officials left the meeting at 11.28am.

Steve Aiken MLA left the meeting at 11.29am

The meeting was suspended at 11.30am.

The meeting resumed at 11.33am in public session.

The Committee considered: COM/2025/526 Proposal for a Regulation amending Regulation (EU) 2024/2865 as regards dates of application and transitional provisions.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to monitor the progress of the proposed replacement act, pursuant to paragraph 7(1) of Schedule 6B to the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to request that the Departments provide revised assessments of impact if any changes are proposed by the Council of the European Union or the European Parliament, which would have a significant impact specific to everyday life of communities in Northern Ireland in a way that is liable to persist.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to request that RaISe monitors the progress of the proposed EU act, including negotiations in the European Parliament and Council of the European Union, and submits quarterly updates, or more often as appropriate, to the Committee.

The Committee considered: COM/2025/531 Proposal for a Regulation amending Regulations (EC) No 1272/2008, (EC) No 1223/2009 and (EU) 2019/1009 as regards simplification of certain requirements and procedures for chemical products.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to monitor the progress of the proposed replacement act, pursuant to paragraph 7(1) of Schedule 6B to the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to request that the Departments provide revised assessments of impact if any changes are proposed by the Council of the European Union or the European Parliament, which would have a significant

impact specific to everyday life of communities in Northern Ireland in a way that is liable to persist.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to request that RalSe monitors the progress of the proposed EU act, including negotiations in the European Parliament and Council of the European Union, and submits quarterly updates, or more often as appropriate, to the Committee.

## 11. Correspondence

The Committee agreed to bring forward agenda item 12.

**11.1** The Committee considered a response from HMRC in relation to correspondence from KME Steelworks Ltd regarding EU customs duty on raw sheet aluminium. The Committee noted that it had previously forwarded the correspondence from KME Steelworks Ltd to the Committee for the Economy, the House of Lords Northern Ireland Scrutiny Committee, and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to invite HMRC to attend a meeting of the Committee to discuss the issues raised by KME Steelworks Ltd.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to forward a copy of HMRC's response to KME Steelworks Ltd and the Committee for the Economy, and inform them that the Committee agreed to invite HMRC to the Committee.

**11.2** The Committee noted a status update from RalSe on COM/2023/451 Proposal for a Regulation on vehicle design and on management of end-of-life vehicles.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to publish the update on the Committee's webpage.

**11.3** The Committee noted a quarterly update from RalSe on COM/2023/137 Proposal for a Regulation on certain market rules and sectoral support measures in the wine sector and for aromatised wine products.



**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to publish the update on the Committee's webpage.

**12. COM/2023/770 Proposal for a Regulation on the protection of animals during transport and related operations, amending Council Regulation (EC) No 1255/97 and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 – Oral Evidence from the Ulster Farmers' Union**

Members considered the following proposed EU act:

COM/2023/770 Proposal for a Regulation on the protection of animals during transport and related operations, amending Council Regulation (EC) No 1255/97 and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005.

Members noted that the proposed EU act has not been notified to the Committee, but following a work planning exercise on 20 February 2025, the Committee agreed to gather evidence on the proposed EU act.

The following witnesses joined the meeting at 11.45am:

Alexander Kinnear	Parliamentary Officer, Ulster Farmers' Union
Kate Adams	Senior European Policy Adviser, British Agriculture Bureau

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to forward the transcript of the evidence session (once available) and the written submissions from the Ulster Farmers' Union and the British Agriculture Bureau to the UK Government and the Department of Agriculture, Environment, and Rural Affairs, and to ask them to consider and comment on the evidence as part of their assessment of the published EU act.

Steve Aiken MLA declared an interest that he has previously worked with Alexander Kinnear on various matters.

The witnesses gave oral evidence on the proposed EU act.

A question and answer session followed.

The Committee noted concerns raised by the Ulster Farmers' Union and British Agriculture Bureau regarding the proposed EU act, and their comments regarding the engagement of the UK Government and NI Executive.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the First and deputy First Minister, to ask how the Executive Office is engaging with the UK Government to increase the resources of the Office of the Northern Ireland Executive in Brussels (ONIEB) to deal with such issues. The Committee also agreed to ask whether individual departments are intending to second more staff to the ONIEB.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the UK Government to ask how it is considering the recommendations in the Independent Review of the Windsor Framework to give additional capacity and support to the NI Civil Service; and how the UK Government is supporting the UK Mission to the EU and the UK Civil Service, so they can in turn support the work of this Committee.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to ask why it hasn't conducted an impact assessment on the proposed Regulation, and when it intends to do so.

Steve Aiken MLA left the meeting at 12.14am.

The evidence session was reported by Hansard.

The witnesses left the meeting at 12.25am.

### **13. Chairperson's Business**

None.

### **14. Any other business**

None.

**15. Date, time, and place of next meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday 2 October 2025 at 10:00am in Room 30.

The meeting was adjourned at 12.26am.

**Ciara Ferguson, MLA**

**Chairperson, Windsor Framework Democratic Scrutiny Committee**