



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Windsor Framework Democratic Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of Proceedings

26 June 2025

Meeting Location: Room 30

Present:

Ciara Ferguson MLA (Chairperson)

David Brooks MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Steve Aiken MLA

Declan Kearney MLA

Peter Martin MLA

Emma Sheerin MLA

Present by Video:

Jonathan Buckley MLA

Eóin Tennyson MLA

Apologies:

Kate Nicholl MLA

In Attendance:

Christopher Dickison (Senior Assistant Clerk)

Jessica Jacques (Senior Assistant Clerk)

Victoria Bourquin (Assistant Clerk)

Suzanne Walsh (Clerical Supervisor)

Shelley Garner (Clerical Officer)

In Attendance by Video:

Oliver Bellew (Assistant Clerk)

The meeting commenced at 10.01am in closed session.

1. Apologies

As above.

2. Declaration of Members' Interest

None.

3. COM/2025/137 Proposal for a Regulation amending Regulations (EU) No 1308/2013, (EU) 2021/2115 and (EU) No 251/2014 as regards certain market rules and sectoral support measures in the wine sector and for aromatised wine products - Legal Advice

Caroline Byers, Legal Adviser, Assembly Legal Services, joined the meeting at 10.02am.

The Committee considered the following proposed EU act:

COM/2025/137 Proposal for a Regulation amending Regulations (EU) No 1308/2013, (EU) 2021/2115 and (EU) No 251/2014 as regards certain market rules and sectoral support measures in the wine sector and for aromatised wine 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 published replacement EU act in public session.

The Legal Adviser left the meeting at 10.18am.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to move to public session at 10.18am.

The meeting commenced at 10.18am in public session.

4. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 29 May 2025.

5. Matters Arising

None.

6. COM/2025/137 Proposal for a Regulation amending Regulations (EU) No 1308/2013, (EU) 2021/2115 and (EU) No 251/2014 as regards certain market rules and sectoral support measures in the wine sector and for aromatised wine products - Departmental Oral Evidence

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

COM/2025/137 Proposal for a Regulation amending Regulations (EU) No 1308/2013, (EU) 2021/2115 and (EU) No 251/2014 as regards certain market

rules and sectoral support measures in the wine sector and for aromatised wine products.

The following officials joined the meeting at 10.20am:

Alison Chambers	Director of Sustainable Agri-Food Development Division, Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
Samantha Swann	Head of Poultrymeat, Eggs, Dairy, Hops, Hemp, Wines & Spirits Policy Branch, Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
Kieran Coghlan	Deputy for Food Security, Beef, Sheep and Pigs Policy Branch, Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

The officials gave oral evidence on the proposed EU act.

A question and answer session followed.

The evidence session was reported by Hansard.

Eóin Tennyson left the meeting at 10.31am.

The officials left the meeting at 10.36am.

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 a revised departmental assessment of impact if any changes to the act 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.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) to request more detail about the issues the Department faces in obtaining information on the volume of trade in wine products between Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the proportion of this which uses the Northern Ireland Retail Movement Scheme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to DAERA to ask if it can provide information on the requirements for the European Commission to produce impact assessments.

7. COM/2025/258 Proposal for a Regulation amending Regulation (EU) 2023/1542 as regards obligations of economic operators concerning battery due diligence policies

The Committee considered the proposed replacement EU act: COM/2025/258 Proposal for a Regulation amending Regulation (EU) 2023/1542 as regards obligations of economic operators concerning battery due diligence policies.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request legal advice and an initial departmental assessment of impact to help inform its decision on whether to monitor the proposed EU act.

Agreed: Noting that the EU act may be adopted, published, and notified to the Committee in the coming weeks, the Committee agreed to inform Legal Services and the relevant department that its requests on the proposed EU act may be superseded with requests on the published EU act.

8. **COM/2025/503 Proposal for a Directive amending Directives 2000/14/EC, 2011/65/EU, 2013/53/EU, 2014/29/EU, 2014/30/EU, 2014/31/EU, 2014/32/EU, 2014/33/EU, 2014/34/EU, 2014/35/EU, 2014/53/EU, 2014/68/EU and 2014/90/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards digitalisation and common specifications**
9. **COM/2025/504 Proposal for a Regulation amending Regulations (EU) No 765/2008, (EU) 2016/424, (EU) 2016/425, (EU) 2016/426, (EU) 2023/1230, (EU) 2023/1542 and (EU) 2024/1781 as regards digitalisation and common specifications**

The Committee agreed to consider agenda items 8 and 9 together.

The Committee considered the proposed replacement EU acts: COM/2025/503 Proposal for a Directive amending Directives 2000/14/EC, 2011/65/EU, 2013/53/EU, 2014/29/EU, 2014/30/EU, 2014/31/EU, 2014/32/EU, 2014/33/EU, 2014/34/EU, 2014/35/EU, 2014/53/EU, 2014/68/EU and 2014/90/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards digitalisation and common specifications; and

COM/2025/504 Proposal for a Regulation amending Regulations (EU) No 765/2008, (EU) 2016/424, (EU) 2016/425, (EU) 2016/426, (EU) 2023/1230, (EU) 2023/1542 and (EU) 2024/1781 as regards digitalisation and common specifications.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request legal advice and an initial departmental assessment of impact on COM/2025/503 Proposal for a Directive as regards digitalisation and common specifications, to help inform its decision on whether to monitor the proposed EU act.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request legal advice and an initial departmental assessment of impact on COM/2025/504 Proposal for a Regulation as regards digitalisation and common specifications, to help inform its decision on whether to monitor the proposed EU act.

10. COM/2023/217 Proposal for a Regulation on detergents and surfactants, amending Regulation (EU) 2019/1020 and repealing Regulation (EC) No 648/2004 - Consideration of survey responses

The Committee considered responses to its public consultation on the proposed EU act COM/2023/217 Proposal for a Regulation on detergents and surfactants amending Regulation (EU) 2019/1020 and repealing Regulation (EC) No 648/2004.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the responses to DAERA, and agreed to request that DAERA comment on the consultation responses in its assessment of the published EU act.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request that DAERA, in its assessment of the published EU act, highlights any changes in the final text agreed between the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament, which alter its initial assessment of the proposal.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the responses to the UK Government and agreed to request that the UK Government considers the responses as part of its assessment of the published EU act.

11. 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 – Consideration of survey responses

The Committee considered responses to its public consultation on the 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 2019/1020.

The Committee noted a response from DAERA on the volume of live animal exports and imports between Northern Ireland, the European Union, Great Britain and Ireland.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the consultation responses to DAERA and the UK Government.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request that DAERA provide an updated assessment of impact if any changes to the text 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.

12. COM/2023/411 Proposal for a Regulation on plants obtained by certain new genomic techniques and their food and feed, and amending Regulation (EU) 2017/625 - Consideration of survey responses

The Committee considered a response to its public consultation on the proposed EU act COM/2023/411 Proposal for a Regulation on plants obtained by certain new genomic techniques and their food and feed, and amending Regulation (EU) 2017/625.

The Committee noted a response from UK Government in relation to whether the proposed EU act would apply in Northern Ireland under Article 13(3), Article 13(4), or both articles of the Windsor Framework.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the consultation response to DAERA.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request that DAERA and the Food Standards Agency (FSA) provide updated 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 forward the consultation response to the UK Government.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the UK Government to ask:

- How the proposed EU act, once adopted and published, would interact with the Genetic Technology (Precision Breeding) Act 2023 and secondary legislation made under this Act?;
- What are the implications of the EU-UK reset (in particular the agreement to negotiate an SPS agreement with the EU) for the regulatory regime for NGTs in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland?; and
- Has the EU indicated to the UK Government that it considers the proposal to be within the scope of the Windsor Framework, and therefore may seek to add it to the Framework via Article 13(4) following adoption?

13.COM/2023/451 Proposal for a Regulation on circularity requirements for vehicle design and on management of end-of-life vehicles, amending Regulations (EU) 2018/858 and 2019/1020 and repealing Directives 2000/53/EC and 2005/64/EC - Consideration of survey responses

The Committee considered a response to its public consultation on the proposed EU act COM/2023/451 Proposal for a Regulation circularity requirements for vehicle design and on management of end-of-life vehicles, amending Regulations (EU) 2018/858 and 2019/1020 and repealing Directives 2000/53/EC and 2005/64/EC.

The Committee noted a response from UK Government in relation to which specific provisions of the proposed EU act would apply in Northern Ireland under Article 13(3) of the Windsor Framework.

The Committee noted that the Council of the European Union has established its negotiating position. The proposed text includes a new provision, Article 56a, entitled “Applicability to and in the United Kingdom in respect of Northern Ireland”.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to send the UK Government’s response and the Council’s negotiating position to Legal Services, requesting that these are considered in any subsequent legal advice.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to send the UK Government response and the Council of the European Union's negotiating position to DAERA and the Department for Infrastructure (DfI).

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request that DAERA and DfI provide updated 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.

14. COM/2023/192 Proposal for a Directive on the Union code relating to medicinal products for human use, and repealing Directive 2001/83/EC and Directive 2009/35/EC and COM/2023/193 Proposal for a Regulation laying down Union procedures for the authorisation and supervision of medicinal products for human use and establishing rules governing the European Medicines Agency, amending Regulation (EC) No 1394/2007 and Regulation (EU) No 536/2014 and repealing Regulation (EC) No 726/2004, Regulation (EC) No 141/2000 and Regulation (EC) No 1901/2006 - Consideration of survey responses

The Committee noted that no responses were received to its public consultation on the following proposed acts:

COM/2023/192 Proposal for a Directive on the Union code relating to medicinal products for human use, and repealing Directive 2001/83/EC and Directive 2009/35/EC; and

COM/2023/193 Proposal for a Regulation laying down Union procedures for the authorisation and supervision of medicinal products for human use and establishing rules governing the European Medicines Agency, amending Regulation (EC) No 1394/2007 and Regulation (EU) No 536/2014 and repealing Regulation (EC) No 726/2004, Regulation (EC) No 141/2000 and Regulation (EC) No 1901/2006.

The Committee noted a response from the Department of Health regarding proposed rules for antimicrobial medicines.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to draw the proposed EU acts to the attention of the Committee for Health.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to publish the responses considered at agenda items 10 to 14 on its website, noting they would be reformatted and redacted to remove personal information and improve readability.

15. Correspondence

15.1 The Committee considered a response from the First Minister and deputy First Minister regarding COM/2023/462 Proposal for a Regulation on the safety of toys and repealing Directive 2009/48/EC.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to respond to the First and deputy First Minister to thank them for the response and acknowledge the position stated, but restate the Committee's position that it expects relevant departments to state whether a replacement EU act will have an impact in relation to a Minister's responsibilities, regardless of whether the policy is reserved. The Committee agreed to ask for that information to be provided in this instance..

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request that the Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) respond to a series of questions previously sent by the Committee to SOLACE NI on COM/2023/462, and agreed to invite OPSS officials to give oral evidence on the proposed EU act.

Declan Kearney left the meeting at 11.03am.

15.2 The Committee considered correspondence from the Clerk to the Assembly and Executive Review Committee (AERC) in relation to cross-cutting Executive strategies.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to respond to the AERC Clerk, stating that the information requested sits outside of the Committee's statutory remit.

15.3 The Committee noted a copy of correspondence from UK Government to the House of Lords Northern Ireland Scrutiny Committee (NISC) regarding the gradual roll-out of EUDAMED.

15.4 The Committee noted a copy of correspondence from UK Government to the NISC regarding a Commission Delegated Regulation on effective and safe use of veterinary medicinal products.

15.5 The Committee noted a copy of correspondence from UK Government to the NISC regarding Regulation (EU) 2023/2411 on the protection of geographical indications for craft and industrial products.

15.6 The Committee noted a copy of correspondence from UK Government to the NISC regarding Regulation (EU) 2023/1252 on establishing a framework for ensuring a secure and sustainable supply of critical raw materials.

15.7 The Committee considered a copy of correspondence from UK Government to the NISC regarding COM/2023/769 on the welfare of dogs and cats and their traceability.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to DAERA to request an update on domestic policy in this area, and its potential interaction with the proposed EU act.

15.8 The Committee noted a copy of correspondence from the UK Government to the NISC regarding Regulation (EU) 2024/1143 on geographical indications for wine, spirit drinks and agricultural products.

15.9 The Committee noted a copy of correspondence from the House of Commons Northern Ireland Affairs Committee to the UK Government regarding the UK-EU exchange of views on the EU Artificial Intelligence Act and the EU Cyber Resilience Act, and the UK-EU Summit.

Declan Kearney rejoined the meeting at 11.08am.

15.10 The Committee considered correspondence from the Federation of Small Businesses NI (FSB), including its report on the Windsor Framework.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite the FSB to present its report to the Committee.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to inform the NISC of the FSB report.

16. Chairperson's Business

16.1 The Committee considered a request from Netcompany for a meeting with the Chairperson on the Trader Support Service.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the Committee for the Economy and advise Netcompany accordingly.

16.2 The Committee considered a report on the Committee's recent visit to Westminster and Brussels.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the UK Government to request clarity on which parts of COM/2023/224 Proposal for a Regulation on compulsory licensing for crisis management would be within the scope of Article 13(3) of the Windsor Framework.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to share a link to the Single Market Strategy with RalSe and the Executive Office.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it will only meet during the summer recess in order to carry out necessary statutory business.

16.3 The Committee considered possible options for pausing notifications from the Cabinet Office over the summer recess period.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that Cabinet Office should be asked to pause notifications to the Committee on 10 July 2025, recommencing on 17 July; and 21 August 2025, recommencing on 28 August.

The Committee noted that the Cabinet Office would be advised accordingly.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to delegate authority to the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson during periods of recess to submit views on the releasing or withholding of information in any non-routine or contentious Freedom of Information requests received by the Committee.

17. Any Other Business

None.

18. Date, time, and place of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 10 September 2025 at 10:00am in Room 30.

The Committee noted that an EU act (Decision (EU) 2025/1228 – Equivalence of field inspections and seed productions in Moldova and Ukraine) was published on 20 June 2025, and would not be notified to the Committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 11.20am.

David Brooks, MLA, Deputy Chairperson

Windsor Framework Democratic Scrutiny Committee