



**COMMITTEE FOR AGRICULTURE, ENVIRONMENT AND RURAL AFFAIRS**

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

**THURSDAY 27 FEBRUARY 2020  
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

- Present:** Mr Declan McAleer MLA (Chairperson)  
Mr Philip McGuigan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Ms Clare Bailey MLA  
Mrs Rosemary Barton MLA  
Mr John Blair MLA  
Mr Maurice Bradley MLA  
Mr Harry Harvey MLA  
Mr William Irwin MLA
- Apologies:** Mr John Dallat MLA
- In attendance:** Ms Stella McArdle, Committee Clerk  
Ms Kathy O'Hanlon, Senior Assistant Clerk  
Ms Elaine Farrell, Assistant Assembly Clerk  
Ms Marion Johnson, Clerical Supervisor  
Ms Marrienne McGuiggan, Clerical Officer  
Ms Suzie Cave, Research Officer (Agenda Item 9)

*The meeting commenced at 10.05 a.m. in closed session to receive a briefing from the clerk on the Environment Bill.*

*The meeting moved into open session at 10.17 a.m.*

**1. Apologies**

As above.

**2. Chairperson's Business**

The Chairperson advised Members that he had attended a meeting with the House of Lords EU Select Committee on 25 February 2020.

### **3. Draft Minutes**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 20 February 2020.

### **4. Correspondence**

The Committee noted the following:

- i. Correspondence from the British Veterinary Association (BVA) inviting Members to a briefing on animal health and welfare on 20 May 2020 in Parliament Buildings.
- ii. Correspondence from the Committee for Finance, which contained a RalSe briefing paper on Assembly Committee Engagement on the 2020-21 departmental budget planning.
- iii. Correspondence from RSPB NI inviting Members to a Sustainable Land Management conference on 18 March 2020.
- iv. Correspondence from the Committee for Infrastructure to the Department on the failure to transfer functions in relation to reservoirs to the Department for Infrastructure.
- v. Correspondence from the Committee for Infrastructure seeking an update from the Department on the progress in relation to the compulsory wearing of safety helmets on quad bikes on farms and private land.
- vi. Correspondence from the Committee for Infrastructure seeking an update from the Department in relation to the illegal waste dump at Mobuoy.
- vii. The Investment Strategy Northern Ireland activity report for February 2020.
- viii. Correspondence from NI Food and Drink, which outlined its Position Paper on the Environment Bill.

The Committee considered correspondence from NI Farm Groups requesting an informal meeting to discuss a proposal to legislate on farm gate prices.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to consider an informal meeting at a future date.

The Committee considered correspondence from ANIFPO/Sea Source inviting the Committee to visit Kilkeel Harbour.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to consider a visit at a future date and after it has finalised its strategic priorities.

## **5. Forward Work Programme**

The clerk briefed the Committee on the draft Forward Work Programme.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to host a stakeholder event at Loughry College in May 2020.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to hold a Strategic Planning Day on 11 June 2020.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the draft Forward Work Programme.

## **6. SL1 Common Agricultural Policy (Direct Payments for Farmers) (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020**

The Committee considered a proposal by the Department to make a Statutory Rule, which will enable 2020 Direct Payments to continue to farmers following the end of CAP Direct Payments legislation for the UK, which occurred after the EU exit day.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that it was content with the proposal for the Statutory Rule.

## **7. SR 2020/20: The Sea Fish Licensing (Revocation) Order (Northern Ireland) 2020**

The Committee considered The Sea Fish Licensing (Revocation) Order (Northern Ireland) 2020, which will revoke The Sea Fish Licensing Order (Northern Ireland) 2019.

*Agreed:* The Committee considered SR 2020/20: The Sea Fish Licensing (Revocation) Order (Northern Ireland) 2020 and, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules report, had no objections to the Rule.

## **8. SR 2020/21: The Sea Fishing (Licenses and Notices) (Revocation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020**

The Committee considered the Sea Fishing (Licenses and Notices) (Revocation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020, which will revoke The Sea Fishing (Licenses and Notices) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019.

*Agreed:* The Committee considered SR 2020/21: The Sea Fishing (Licenses and Notices) (Revocation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 and, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules report, had no objections to the Rule.

#### **9. Oral Briefing from RalSe on the UK Environment Bill**

The Research Officer joined the meeting at 10.25 a.m. and briefed the Committee on the UK Environment Bill.

This was followed by a question and answer session.

*Mr Bradley joined the meeting at 10.29 a.m.*

*Mr Irwin joined the meeting at 10.43 a.m.*

The Chairperson thanked the Research Officer for her attendance.

#### **10. Departmental Oral Evidence Session on the UK Government Environment Bill**

The following departmental officials joined the meeting at 11:03 a.m.

John Mills, Grade 5, Director of Environmental Policy  
Hazel Bleeks, Principal Officer, Regulatory and Natural Resources Policy Division  
Karl Beattie, Grade 7, Environment Bill Team

The officials briefed the Committee and this was followed by a question and answer session.

*Mr Blair left the meeting at 11.54 a.m.*

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their attendance.

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their attendance.

- Agreed:* The Committee agreed to publish all relevant papers on the LCMs for Agriculture, Environment and Fisheries onto the Committee web page.
- Agreed:* The Committee agreed to forward a link to all the evidence taken by the Committee on the Environment Bill to the House of Commons Environment Bill Committee.
- Agreed:* The Committee agreed to request a written briefing from the Department on the relationship between the Office of Environmental Protection and the Protocol and how the Department intends to address the non-regression of environmental standards.

## **11. Oral Evidence Session with Northern Ireland Environment Link**

The following representatives joined the meeting at 12.02 p.m.

Craig McGuicken, Chief Executive Officer, NI Environment Link  
Joanne Sherwood, Director, RSBP (NI)  
Victoria Magreehan, External Affairs Manager, National Trust  
Jane Clarke, Nature Protection Officer, RSPB (NI)

The representatives briefed the Committee and this was followed by a question and answer session.

*Ms Bailey left the meeting at 12.02 p.m.*

*Mr Blair rejoined the meeting at 12.08 p.m.*

*Ms Bailey rejoined the meeting at 12.10 p.m.*

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for their attendance.

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

The meeting suspended at 12.40 p.m.

The meeting resumed at 2.02 p.m. in Room 29.

*Present:* Mr Declan McAleer MLA (Chairperson)  
Mr Philip McGuigan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Ms Clare Bailey MLA  
Mrs Rosemary Barton MLA  
Mr Maurice Bradley MLA  
Mr William Irwin MLA

## **12. Oral Evidence Session with the Chartered Institute of Waste**

Tim Walker, a representative from the Chartered Institute of Waste, joined the meeting at 2.02 p.m.

Mr Walker briefed the Committee and this followed by a question and answer session.

*Mr Blair joined the meeting at 2.06 p.m.*

The Chairperson thanked Mr Walker for his attendance.

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

## **13. Oral Evidence Session with UFU/NIAPA**

The following representatives of the UFU/NIAPA joined the meeting at 3.03 p.m.

Wesley Aston, Chief Executive Officer, UFU  
Aileen Lawson, Senior Policy Officer, UFU  
James Lowe, Chairman, NIAPA  
Jim Carmichael, Development Officer, NIAPA

The representatives briefed the Committee and this was followed by a question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for their attendance.

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

## **14. Oral Briefing from Brexit and Environment Group**

The following representatives from the Brexit and Environment Group joined the meeting at 3.28 p.m.

Dr Viviane Gravey, QUB  
Dr Mary Dobbs, QUB  
Professor Charlotte Burns, Sheffield University

The representatives briefed the Committee and this was followed by a question and answer session.

*Mr Blair left the meeting at 3.46 p.m.*

*Mr Blair rejoined the meeting at 3.51 p.m.*

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for their attendance.

**15.AOB**

There was no other business.

**16.Date, time and place of the next meeting**

The next meeting of the Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs will take place on Thursday 5 March 2020 at 10.00 a.m. in Room 30.

3.58 p.m.     *The meeting adjourned.*

Declan Mc Aleer

Declan McAleer, Chairperson, Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development

5 March 2020

Date