



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

Minutes of Proceedings

Thursday 8 July 2021

Meeting Location: Room 30/Virtual Meeting via StarLeaf

Present: Declan McAleer MLA (Chairperson)
Philip McGuigan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
William Irwin MLA

Present by Video or Teleconference:
Clare Bailey MLA
Rosemary Barton MLA
John Blair MLA
Harry Harvey MLA
Patsy McGlone MLA

Apologies: None

Present: Nick Henry, Clerk
Kate Duffy, Clerical Officer

In Attendance by Video or Teleconference:
Elaine Farrell, Assistant Clerk
Neal Flanagan, Assistant Clerk
Marion Johnson, Clerical Supervisor
Barbara Love, Bill Clerk (agenda item 12)



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The meeting commenced at 10.02 a.m. in Open Session

1. Apologies

None.

2. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson advised the Committee that it is standard practice 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. He further advised that any such views expressed would be brought to the attention of the Committee at the first meeting after summer recess.

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

3. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 28 June and 1 July 2021.

4. Matters Arising

None.



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5. Departmental Written Briefing: SR 2021/182 - The Waste (Fees and Charges) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021

The Committee considered SR 2021/182 - The Waste (Fees and Charges) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 and noted that the regulations were last considered at the meeting on 24 June 2021 when it was agreed that the policy should move to the next legislative stage.

Noted: The Committee noted the Forty-Fifth Report from the Examiner of Statutory Rules in which she has advised that there are no issues with SR 2021/182.

Question put and agreed:

“That the Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs has considered SR 2021/182 The Waste (Fees and Charges) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 and has no objection to the Rule”.

6. Departmental Written Briefing: SR 2021/186 - The Agricultural Commodities (Coronavirus) (Income Support) Scheme No.2 (Northern Ireland) 2021

Agreed: The Committee noted that the Examiner of Statutory Rules has not yet reported on the Regulations and agreed to defer consideration of the Statutory Rule until September 2021. It was noted that this delay will not have an impact on the issue of payments by the Department.

Mr Blair joined the meeting at 10.06 a.m.

7. Departmental Written Briefing: SR 2021/187 - The Agricultural (2017 North West Area) Flooding (Income Support) Scheme (Northern Ireland) 2021

Agreed: The Committee noted that the Examiner of Statutory Rules has not yet reported on the Regulations and agreed to defer consideration of the Statutory Rule



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until September 2021. It was noted that this delay will not have an impact on the issue of payments by the Department.

8. Departmental Written Briefing: SR 2021/196 - The Agriculture (Student Fees) (Amendment) (No.2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021

The Committee considered SR 2021/196 The Agriculture (Student Fees) (Amendment) (No.2) Regulations Northern Ireland 2021 and noted that the Regulations were last considered by the Committee at the meeting on 1 July 2021 when it was agreed that the policy should move to the next legislative stage.

Question put and agreed:

“That the Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs has considered SR 2021/196 The Agriculture (Student Fees) (Amendment) (No.2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 and has no objection to the Rule”.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to further outline the concerns of the Committee in respect of the discouragement of students from the EU with non-settled status in applying to further education courses at CAFRE.

9. Departmental Written Briefing: Statutory Instrument – The Common Organisation of the Markets in Agricultural Products (Transitional Arrangements) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 [AG/042]

The Committee noted that Statutory Instrument: The Common Organisation of the Markets in Agricultural Products (Transitional Arrangements) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 [AG/042] is a fully reserved matter and is for noting only.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to ascertain why the Minister does not agree with the Statutory Instrument and to request that for any future SI disagreement, that the Committee is informed of the detail as a matter of course.



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Ms Bailey joined the meeting at 10.12 a.m.

10. Clerk's Written Briefing - Sea Fish Industry Challenges

The clerk briefed the Committee on the challenges faced by the sea fish industry over the past 18 months due to Covid-19 and outlined the support provided by the Department in relation to this.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request an update on the progress of short-medium compensatory support for the sea fish industry and other sectors within DAERA's remit who have been disadvantaged by Covid-19.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to seek an update on progress on the development of the strategic plan for the development of Kilkeel Harbour.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the sea fishing industry representatives to outline the actions taken by the Committee and to offer to meet with them to discuss further.

11. Clerk's Written Briefing - Common Frameworks

The clerk briefed the Committee on the progress of Common Frameworks and the anticipated next steps in respect of their implementation in full by the end of 2021.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department and the Executive Officer to seek an updated position on the timescale for the confirmation of the relevant Common Frameworks and subsequent referral to the Assembly.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to information on the provisional Common Frameworks that are currently awaiting TEO approval.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request details of the technical stakeholders it consulted with in respect of the DAERA Common Frameworks.



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The meeting moved into Closed Session at 10.34 a.m.

12. Clerk's Written Briefing – Climate Change Bill

The Bill Clerk, Barbara Love, joined the meeting via StarLeaf at 10.35 a.m. and briefed the Committee and provided procedural advice on the Committee Stage of Bills.

The clerk briefed the Committee on the process for dealing with two Climate Change Bills at the same time.

Mr Harvey left the meeting at 11.00 a.m.

Mr McGuigan declared an interest as a co-sponsor of the Climate Change Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek confirmation from the Speaker's Office that procedural approval has been granted to progress the call for evidence before the Second Stage of the Department's Climate Change Bill.

The meeting moved into Open Session at 11.20 a.m.

Mr Harvey re-joined the meeting at 11.20 a.m.

13. Departmental Written Briefing: Draft NIEA Business Plan 2021-22

Agreed: The Committee agreed to defer consideration of this agenda item as no papers had been received from the Department.

14. Correspondence

The Committee noted the following:



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- i. Correspondence from the House of Lords Common Frameworks Committee in respect of its work on the Common Frameworks Programme.
- ii. Correspondence from the Department on its public call for evidence on a plan to eliminate plastic pollution in Northern Ireland.
- iii. Correspondence from the Department in respect of the Statistical Review of Northern Ireland Agriculture 2020.
- iv. Correspondence from the Department advising of its intention to publish a document outlining responses from stakeholders to a consultation it carried out on a discussion document on the principles/plans of the Environment Bill and how it relates to Northern Ireland.
- v. Correspondence from the Speaker's Office notifying the Committee that Dolores Kelly MLA has laid a petition before the Assembly on an "Animal Cruelty Register" and that the Department has been notified accordingly.
- vi. The Forty-Fifth Report from the Examiner of Statutory Rules in which she advises that no attention is drawn to SR 2021/182 and SR 2021/196 which the Committee is considering at today's meeting.
- vii. Correspondence from the Department forwarding the NIEA Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2021.
- viii. Correspondence from the Assembly Business Office notifying the Committee that the Assembly has confirmed SR 2021/161: The Sea Fish Industry (Coronavirus) (Fixed Costs) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 on 5 July 2021.

The Committee considered correspondence from EnerChem Solutions on its proposed pilot scheme for a joint venture with between public and private sector with the aim of supporting green transition and eco-friendly practice for the utilisation of excess farm waste.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Minister in support of the EnerChem Solutions proposal.

The Committee considered correspondence from the Committee for the Economy on its scrutiny of the Parental Bereavement (Leave and Pay) Bill and its call for evidence from statutory committees.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward any comments on the Bill to the clerk by close of play on 9 July 2021.



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The Committee considered correspondence from the Department on the launch of an 8-week consultation period on the Rural Policy Framework.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request that it forwards an analysis of consultation responses in due course.

15. Forward Work Programme

Noted: The Committee noted that the Forward Work Programme will be populated over the summer recess period and brought back to the first meeting in September 2021 for approval.

16. AOB

None.

17. 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 9 September 2021 at 10.00 a.m. and will be hybrid meeting streamed on the Assembly's website.

The meeting moved into Closed Session at 11.22 a.m.

18. Departmental Oral Evidence Session: Consultation on Eradication of Bovine TB

The following Department officials joined the meeting at 11.23 a.m.

Neal Gartland, Director of Animal Health and Welfare Policy Division
Seamus Murray, Assistant Director of Animal Health and Welfare Policy Division
Michael Hatch, Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer
Raymond Kirk, Senior Principal Veterinary Officer



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

Mr Irwin joined the meeting at 11.41 a.m.

Mr McGuigan left the meeting at 11.44 a.m.
Mr McGuigan re-joined the meeting at 11.49 a.m.

Mr Harvey left the meeting at 11.49 a.m.
Mr Harvey re-joined the meeting at 11.58 a.m.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request an oral briefing on the outcome of the consultation responses in due course and before publication of same.

19. Committee consideration of the draft report: Withdrawal of DAERA and Local Authority Staff from the Ports

The Committee discussed the minority opinion to be appended to the Committee report on the withdrawal of staff from ports by way of an addendum to the report. Members also discussed the content of a draft press release to accompany the release of the report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed on a form of words to be added to the report and the minority addendum clarifying the view of the majority of members in respect of the content of the addendum.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the content of a press release to accompany the release of the report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the report, the minority addendum and the press release be published on Friday 9 July 2021.



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The meeting was adjourned at 1.03 p.m.

Declan McAleer, MLA
Chairperson, Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee