



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

THURSDAY, 3 SEPTEMBER 2015

SENATE CHAMBER, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present: Ms Anna Lo MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Colum Eastwood MLA
Mr Alban Maginness 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
Mrs Pam Cameron MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Ian McCrea MLA
Mr Barry McElduff MLA
Mr Ian Milne MLA

The meeting began in closed session at 10.37am.

1. Correspondence

The Committee noted a response from the Department regarding solar energy developments.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister regarding its Inquiry into Building a United Community.

2. Consultation

The Committee noted a synopsis of responses to a consultation on proposed changes to producer responsibility obligations.

The meeting moved to public session at 10.45 am

3. Apologies.

The apologies are noted above.

4. Chairpersons Business.

The Committee noted an invitation for the Chairperson to speak at a Science and Stormont Event on 'Energy and the Environment' on Monday 12th October 2015.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Chairperson would speak on behalf of the Committee at the event.

The Committee noted a report on an informal meeting on the use of fire prevention panels to prevent fire spreading to oil tanks.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and Building control about this matter.

The Committee noted a letter from Kingspan seeking a meeting with the Chairperson on development rights for solar photovoltaics on non-domestic buildings.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Chairperson would meet with the company and report back to it on issues raised.

The Committee noted that the report on the Enterprise, Trade & Investment Committee inquiry into Growing the Economy, Creating Jobs with Lower Corporation Tax would be debated on Monday 7th September 2015.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Chairperson would speak on its behalf during the debate.

5. Minutes.

The minutes from the meeting held on 2nd July 2015 were agreed.

6. Matters arising.

The Committee noted a response from the Department on the Assessment of the Quality of Recycled Waste.

The Committee noted a response from the Department on restructuring Management Structures.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite the Minister to brief it on Departmental priorities and restructuring.

The Committee noted a response from the Department on the voluntary exit scheme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department requesting an update on the scheme.

The Committee noted a response from the Department providing a list of projects funded through the Department's Road Safety Grants Scheme.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Department advising that the European Commission has issued an infraction letter to the UK authorities regarding the designation and management of Special Areas of Conservation under the 'Habitats' Directive.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to determine if any of the sites affected are in Northern Ireland.

The Committee noted a response from the Department regarding issues raised about Japanese knotweed.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department for further information on new EU regulations.

The Committee noted a response from the Department on issues raised during NILGA briefing on 25 June 2015.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the response to NILGA for information.

The Department noted correspondence from the Department regarding a land strategy.

The Committee noted responses from Mid and East Antrim Council and Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Council regarding a Register of Trees of National Interest proposed by the Woodland Trust.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department and the Woodland Trust suggesting that a working group is established to consider this matter.

The Committee noted correspondence from Windwatch NI regarding a n evidence session with Departmental officials.

Agreed: The Committee agreed a response to Windwatch NI.

7. Consultations

The Committee noted a consultation on the Draft Fluorinated Greenhouse Gases Regulations (NI) 2015.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request a synopsis of responses from the Department once available.

The Committee noted a consultation on proposals to amend the Fit and Proper Person Requirements of the Waste Management Licensing Regime.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request a synopsis of responses from the Department once available.

The Committee noted a consultation on proposed changes to the unladen weight for powered mobility scooters and powered wheelchairs.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request a synopsis of responses from the Department once available.

The Committee considered a synopsis of responses to the consultation on the Draft Planning (Hazardous Substances) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2015.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content that the Department proceed to draft the Statutory Rule.

The Committee considered the synopsis of responses for the consultation on tractor and trailer speeds and weights.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek the views of the Committees for Agriculture and Regional Development.

8. SL1 - The Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015.

The Committee considered the Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015.

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

9. SL1 – The Draft Local Government (Community Planning Partners) Order (NI) 2015

The Committee considered the Draft Local Government (Community Planning Partners) Order (NI) 2015.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department for further information.

10. SL1 – The Road Traffic (Fixed Penalty) (Offences) (Amendment) Order (NI) 2015

The Committee considered the Road Traffic (Fixed Penalty) (Offences) (Amendment) Order (NI) 2015.

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

11. The Emissions Performance Standard Monitoring and Enforcement Regulations (Northern Ireland)

The Committee noted a consultation on the Emissions Performance Standard Monitoring and Enforcement Regulations (Northern Ireland).

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request a synopsis of responses from the Department once available.

12. SR 2015/288 the Hazardous Waste (Amendment No 2) Regulations (NI) 2015.

Question put and agreed:

The Committee for the Environment has considered SR 2015/288 the Hazardous Waste (Amendment No 2) Regulations (NI) 2015 and subject to the report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules, has no objection to the Rule.

13. SR 2015/301 the Waste Management Licensing (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2015

Question put and agreed:

The Committee for the Environment has considered SR 2015/301 the Waste Management Licensing (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2015 and subject to the report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules, has no objection to the Rule.

14. Environmental Better Regulation Bill

The Committee noted responses to its call for evidence on the Environmental Better Regulation Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to publish the responses on the Assembly website.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite NILGA, Northern Ireland Environment Link & Arc 21 to give oral evidence on the Bill.

15. Northern Ireland Environment Week

Agreed: The Committee agreed an invitation and list of invitees to an event to launch Northern Ireland Environment.

Agreed: The Committee agreed a programme for Committee sponsored events.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to issue a joint press release with Northern Ireland Environment Link.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite members of the Committee for Enterprise, Trade & Investment to a tour of environmental features of Parliament Buildings.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to other statutory Committees, the Speakers office and Assembly Commission regarding the event.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to have the Great Hall lit green for Environment Week.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to provide refreshments for events taking place in Parliament Buildings on Tuesday 22 September 2015.

16. Correspondence.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for the Office of the First Minister & deputy First Minister regarding the Northern Ireland Executive's Strategic EU Priorities for 2015 /16.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking its views on the draft.

The Committee noted a response from the Department to Justice (No 2) Bill.

The Committee noted a response from the Department regarding listed building grant schemes.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Department regarding Guidance for Local Government.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the guidance to NILGA for its views.

The Committee noted correspondence from Broughderg Community regarding the wind industry.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the letter to the Department for comment.

The Committee noted correspondence regarding statutory rules agreed by the Assembly.

The Committee noted the DOE Annual Report and Accounts – year end 31 March 2015.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department for further information.

Mr Maginness joined the meeting at 11.38am.

The Committee noted the NIEA Annual Report and Accounts 2014/15.

The Committee noted the DVA Annual Report and Accounts 2014/15.

The Committee noted the Committee on Climate change Annual report and accounts 14/15.

The Committee noted the Committee on Climate Change report on meeting carbon budgets.

The Committee noted the Committee on Climate Change report on progress in preparing for climate change.

The Committee noted the Committee on climate change report on reducing emissions and preparing for climate change.

The Committee noted the Equality Commission annual progress report 2014/15.

The Committee noted a report from Imtac on the Accessible Transport Strategy (ATS) 2025.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the report to the Department.

The Committee noted an ISNI report for August 2015.

The Committee noted the Irish Environment Newsletter.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Finance and Personnel Committee regarding departmental financial forecasting.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Finance and Personnel Committee regarding public sector sickness absence.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Department regarding George Best Belfast City Airport compliance information.

17. Forward Work Programme.

The Committee noted the Departments programme of work for September to December 2015.

18. Any Other Business.

The Committee agreed to write to the Department regarding its policy on anaerobic digesters in village environments.

19. Date, Time and Place of next meeting.

The Committee agreed that its next meeting will be held at 10.00am on Thursday 10th September 2015 in the RSPB WOW Centre, Belfast.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 11.44am.

Anna Lo, MLA

Chairperson, Committee for the Environment

10 September 2015