

COMMITTEE FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**TUESDAY 5 NOVEMBER 2013
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Mr Paul Frew MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Joe Byrne MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Thomas Buchanan MLA
Mrs Jo-Anne Dobson MLA
Mr William Irwin MLA
Mr Trevor Lunn MLA
Mr Ian Milne MLA
Mr Declan McAleer MLA
Ms Michelle McIlveen MLA
Mr Oliver McMullan MLA
Mr Robin Swann MLA

In attendance: Ms Stella McArdle, Committee Clerk
Ms Elaine Farrell, Assistant Clerk
Mr Mark O'Hare, Clerical Supervisor
Ms Dagmar Walgraeve Clerical Officer
Mr Michael Heery, Research Officer (for item 7)

1.30 p.m. The meeting commenced in Closed Session

1. Reservoirs Bill: Pre-introductory briefing: Rivers Agency

The following Rivers Agency officials joined the meeting at 1.31 p.m.

David Porter, Director of Development
Kieran Brazier, Head of Bill Team

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

1.34 p.m. Ms McIlveen and Mr McMullan joined the meeting.

1.37 p.m. Mr McAleer joined the meeting.

1.40 p.m. Mr Milne joined the meeting.

1.44 p.m. Mr Irwin joined the meeting.
2.00 p.m. Mrs Dobson left the meeting.
2.01 p.m. Mr McAleer left the meeting.
2.02 p.m. Mr Lunn left the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request information on district councils who are reservoir owners and details on which councils have actively engaged with Rivers Agency during the stakeholder events on the proposed legislation.

2.30 p.m. The meeting moved into Open Session.

2. Apologies

There are no apologies.

3. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson advised the Committee that he had met with the Earl of Shaftesbury to discuss the ownership of Lough Neagh.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request an update on the findings of Lough Neagh Advisory Working Group.

4. Minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2013

Agreed: The Committee agreed the draft minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2013.

5. Matters arising

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence from the Department dated 24 October 2013 regarding issues raised at the Committee meeting on 8 October 2013.

Agreed: The Committee noted the copied correspondence from the Minister to Portaferry Regeneration dated 23 October 2013 regarding Exploris Aquarium. The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the ETI Committee for information.

Agreed: The Committee noted the correspondence from the Minister dated 17 October 2013 regarding issues raised at the Committee meeting on 1 October. The Committee agreed to forward an extract within the correspondence to NILGA and the ETI Committee.

- Noted:* The Committee noted the correspondence from the Department dated 25 October 2013 advising how the Childcare Bright Start Strategy will be taken forward.
- Noted:* The Committee noted the correspondence from DFP dated 22 October 2013 regarding rate reliefs for Equine Premises.
- Agreed:* The Committee noted the correspondence from the Finance and Personnel Committee dated 22 October 2013 advising that it continues to be interested in the issue of rate reliefs for Equine Premises. The Committee agreed to forward any further items of correspondence on this subject to the DFP Committee for information.
- Agreed:* The Committee noted the submission from CAFRE dated 25 October 2013 regarding emerging training needs for health and safety issues on a farm. The Committee agreed to include the submission in its review on Farm Safety and add to the Committee review website page.
- Noted:* The Committee noted the DARD Investment Strategy Report for October 2013.
- Agreed:* The Committee noted the correspondence from the Joint Committee on Agriculture, Food and Marine dated 30 October 2013 regarding the Management Agreement for seabed leasing in Lough Foyle/Carlingford Lough. The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the Loughs Agency for information.
- Noted:* The Committee noted the correspondence from the Department dated 29 October 2013 regarding a Farm Safety Survey, which will be forwarded to the Committee upon completion.
- Noted:* The Committee noted the correspondence from Farmers for Action regarding an article in the Farmers Guardian which highlights the debt faced by farmers.
- Noted:* The Committee noted the update from the Department on Ash Die-back.

6. Outcome of the Agri-Food Better Regulation & Simplification Action Plan 2010-13: Oral Briefing DARD

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting at 2.34 p.m.

Gerry Lavery, Deputy Secretary
Colin Hart, Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer
Andrew Elliott, Director of Rural Payments
Philip Gilmore, Deputy Principal

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

2.39 p.m. Ms McIlveen and Mr Milne left the meeting.

2.45 p.m. Mr Buchanan joined the meeting.

2.49 p.m. Mr Lunn rejoined the meeting.

2.50 p.m. Mrs Dobson and Mr Swann left the meeting.

2.54 p.m. Mrs Dobson rejoined the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request a breakdown of the recommendations contained in the NI Food Better Regulation and Simplification Review, including those for joint consideration with DOE.

7. DARD Resource Accounts 2012/13: Oral Briefing RalSe

The Assembly Research Officer joined the meeting at 3.12 p.m and briefed the Committee on the DARD Resource Accounts 2012/13. This was followed by a question and answer session.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the research paper to the Department and request an oral briefing on this issue.

8. SR 2013/244: The African Horse Sickness Regulations (NI) 2013

Question put and agreed:

That the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development has considered SR 2013/244: The African Horse Sickness Regulations (NI) 2013 and, subject to the approval of the Examiner of Statutory Rules, has no objections to the rule.

3.27 p.m. Mr Irwin rejoined the meeting.

9. Correspondence

- Agreed:* The Committee noted the correspondence from the OFMDFM Committee dated 22 October 2013 on the Implementation Report on the Executives EU Priorities 2012-13 and agreed to forward it to the Department to seek an update on the targets which fall under their remit.
- Noted:* The Committee noted the copied correspondence from the Chairman of the EU Committee dated 17 October 2013 regarding its aspirations for the implementation of CAP.
- Noted:* The Committee noted the correspondence from the OFMDFM Committee dated 24 October 2013 on the Joint Ministerial Council (Europe) meeting on 4 March 2013.
- Noted:* The Committee noted the copied correspondence from the ETI Committee dated 25 October 2013 regarding Exploris Aquarium.
- Noted:* The Committee noted the invitation from the Minister to a stakeholder event at Greenmount Campus on 27 November 2013.
- Agreed:* The Committee noted the correspondence from the Department dated 28 October 2013 on the UK Government's Review of the Balance of Competences. The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request a copy of their response to the review.

10. Farm Safety Visit

- Agreed:* The Committee agreed the draft Press Release for the visit to the Cleland Farm, Saintfield on 7 November 2013.

11. Forward Work Programme

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

12. AOB

- Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request an update on the Rathlin Island Fishing Exclusion Zones.

13. Date, time and place of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development will take place on Tuesday 12 November 2013 at 1.30 p.m. in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting adjourned at 3.30 p.m.

Paul Frew, Chairperson, Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development

Date