

COMMITTEE FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

TUESDAY 11 NOVEMBER 2014
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

- Present: Mr William Irwin MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Joe Byrne MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Sydney Anderson MLA
Mr Thomas Buchanan MLA
Mr Tom Elliott MLA
Mr Ian Milne MLA
Mr Declan McAleer MLA
Mr Kieran McCarthy MLA
Mr Oliver McMullan MLA
Mr Edwin Poots MLA
- Apologies: Mrs Joanne Dobson MLA
- In attendance: Ms Stella McArdle, Committee Clerk
Ms Elaine Farrell, Assistant Clerk
Mr Mark O'Hare, Clerical Supervisor
Ms Alison Ferguson, Clerical Officer
Ms Aoibhinn Treanor, Bill Clerk (agenda item 1)
Ms Eilis Haughey, Bill Clerk (agenda item 6)

1.07 p.m. The meeting commenced in Closed Session.

1. Reservoirs Bill

The Committee received a briefing from the Bill Clerk on the process for the Consideration Stage of a Bill.

- 1.11 p.m. Mr Milne joined the meeting.*
1.16 p.m. Mr Buchanan joined the meeting.
1.24 p.m. Mr Poots joined the meeting.
1.25 p.m. Mr Poots left the meeting.

1.26 p.m. Mr McAleer joined the meeting.
1.39 p.m. Mr Buchanan left the meeting.
1.40 p.m. Mr Buchanan rejoined the meeting.
1.42 p.m. Mr McAleer left the meeting.
1.49 p.m. Mr McAleer rejoined the meeting.
1.56 p.m. Mr Poots rejoined the meeting.
1.57 p.m. Mr Elliott left the meeting.
2.00 p.m. Mr Elliott rejoined the meeting.
2.02 p.m. Mr Elliot left the meeting.
2.21 p.m. Mr Buchanan left the meeting.
2.26 p.m. Mr Elliott rejoined the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee discussed the proposed amendments by Rivers Agency to Clause 25 and 33; the Committee agreed to hear from Rivers Agency later in the meeting in order to seek clarification on a number of issues.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that at Consideration Stage of the Reservoirs Bill, each Member would take responsibility for a group of amendments.

2.29 p.m. *The meeting suspended.*

2.38 p.m. *The meeting moved into Open Session.*

The following Members were in attendance: Mr Anderson, Mr Byrne, Mr Elliott, Mr Milne, Mr McAleer, Mr McCarthy, Mr McMullan and Mr Poots.

2. Apologies

The apologies are noted above.

3. Chairperson's Business

Agreed: The Committee noted the report on the visit to Scotland and agreed to seek a briefing on the Farm Business Improvement Scheme for early 2015.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek the views of the ETI Committee on the value of hosting a joint stakeholder event on Going for Growth; focused on the Single Supply Chain.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule a briefing with the Department on Monday 24 November 2014 at 12.00 p.m. in respect of the Budget 2015/16.

4. Minutes of the meeting held 4 November 2014

Agreed: The Committee agreed the draft minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2014.

5. Matters Arising

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 6 November 2014 from the Department in respect of issues raised at the Committee meeting on 21 October 2014.

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 4 November 2014 from the Minister in respect of the NIFAIS project.

2.45 p.m. Mr Buchanan rejoined the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to move to agenda item 7.

6. Oral briefing Rural Development Council: Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion

The following representatives joined the meeting at 2.46 p.m.

Teresa Canavan, Chief Executive
Olga Gallagher, Director of Programmes
Michael Kelly, Director of Operations

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

2.52 p.m. Mr McMullan left the meeting.

3.07 p.m. Mr Milne left the meeting.

3.10 p.m. Mr Anderson left the meeting.

3.16 p.m. Mr McMullan rejoined the meeting.

3.24 p.m. Mr McAleer left the meeting.

3.25 p.m. Mr Byrne left the meeting.

7. Reservoirs Bill

Noted: The Committee noted the Departmental amendments to Clause 120.

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence from the Department outlining the revised number of reservoirs from 151 to 150.

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting at 3.32 p.m.

Kieran Brazier, Head of Bill Team
Mary McKeown, Deputy Principal

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

3.30 p.m. Mr McAleer rejoined the meeting.

3.31 p.m. Mr Byrne rejoined the meeting.

3.34 p.m. Mr Anderson rejoined the meeting.

3.34 p.m. Mr McAleer left the meeting.

3.51 p.m. Mr Milne rejoined the meeting.

4.09 p.m. Mr McMullan left the meeting.

4.17 p.m. Mr McMullan rejoined the meeting.

4.24 p.m. The meeting moved into closed session.

Agreed: The Committee discussed a number of options in respect of clause 25 and 33 and agreed to seek amendments from the Department.

5.05 p.m. The meeting suspended

5.20 p.m. The meeting resumed in closed session.

The following Members were in attendance: Mr Anderson, Mr Buchanan, Mr Irwin, Mr Milne, Mr McCarthy, Mr McMullan and Mr Poots.

5.26 p.m. The meeting moved into open session.

The officials rejoined the meeting at 5.26 p.m.

5.29 p.m. Mr Elliott rejoined the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek amendments from the Department to bring forward a supervising regime for visits, brought forward by regulation. The officials agreed to consider and report back to the Committee on the issue.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask the Department to bring forward an amendment to provide that the regime on the number of visits by a Supervising Engineer, to a high or medium consequence reservoir, is done by regulation subject to draft affirmative procedure. The Committee indicated that the details of the regulations would be

agreed at a later date but should include a reduction in required visits once the reservoir was at the required standard.

8. Oral Briefing DARD: Fishing Opportunities 2015

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting at 5.32 p.m.

Ian Humes, Principal Officer
Paddy Campbell, Deputy Principal

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

5.44 p.m. Mr Milne left the meeting.

9. Written Briefing DARD: SL1 Draft CAP Direct Payments to Farmers Under Support Schemes (Cross-compliance) Regulations (NI) 2015

Agreed: The Committee noted the SL1 Draft CAP Direct Payments to Farmers under Support Schemes (Cross-Compliance) Regulations (NI) 2015. The Committee agreed to seek a briefing from the Department for the meeting on 18 November 2014 in relation to the proposed regulations.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department on the issue of an extension to the hedge cutting season in certain circumstances.

10. Written Briefing: Joint CAP paper update – UK and Ireland legislatures

Noted: The Committee noted the joint CAP paper update – UK and Ireland Legislatures forwarded by RaISe.

11. Correspondence

Noted: The Committee noted that the Rivers Agency Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2014 is available on line.

Agreed: The Committee noted the emailed correspondence from Ms E Kane on the death of two horses from sycamore trees; and agreed to forward to the Department for direct response to the individual.

Agreed: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 4 November 2014 from the ETI Committee on a Legislative Consent Motion for the

Deregulation Bill. The Committee agreed to respond to the ETI Committee to advise that there are no issues or concerns.

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 5 November 2014 from the Minister in respect of the date for the European Court of Justice will hear the cases on disallowance.

12. Forward Work Programme

Noted: The Committee noted that Financial Scrutiny training will take place at the Committee meeting on 18 November 2014.

Agreed: The Committee noted the correspondence from the Committee for Finance and Personnel on the timeline for the budget scrutiny process and a Research paper on Lines of Questioning. The Committee agreed to forward the Research paper to the Department for comment on Part B.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the Forward Work Programme.

13. AOB

There is no other business.

14. Date and time of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development will take place on Tuesday 18 November 2014 at 1.30 p.m. in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

6.14 p.m. The meeting adjourned.

William Irwin, Chairperson, Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development

Date